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Marie Antoinette

from a painting by Vigée le Brun

THE FLIGHT OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

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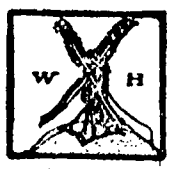
FROM THE FRENCH OF

G. LENOTRE

BY

MRS. RODOLPH STAWELL

With over Fifty Illustrations



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TO MY FRIEND

LÉON-PIERRE AUBEY.

Very affectionately,

G. L.

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I

COUNT AXEL DE FERSEN 1

CHAPTER II

THE FLIGHT 22

CHAPTER III

THE NIGHT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST 57

CHAPTER IV

PARIS ON THE SAME DAY 97

CHAPTER V

THE PURSUIT 118

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN 145

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE ASSEMBLY 165

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE JOURNEY 196

CHAPTER IX

THE CASE OF MONSIEUR LÉONARD 221

CHAPTER X

PÈRE SAUCE 238

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XI

PAGE

GENERAL RADET 251

CHAPTER XII

THE ADVENTURES OF DROUET 267

CHAPTER XIII

THE FATE OF FERSEN 287

CHAPTER XIV

VARENNES AFTER THE DRAMA 301

INDEX 329

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

		PAGE
Marie Antoinette. From a painting by Vigée le Brun	*Frontispiece*	
Count Axel de Fersen	*To face*	6
Fersen's House in the Rue Matignon		15
Card of Admission to the Queen's Apartments		19
Plans of the ground-floor and first-floor of the Palace of the Tuileries in 1791		24
Plan of the approaches to the Tuileries in 1791		33
Entrance to the Court of the Tuileries in 1791	*To face*	38
The Barrier of St. Martin in 1791	,,	38
François Florent de Valory	,,	42
Drouet	,,	42
Notre-Dame-de-l'Épine		48
The Royal Berline	*To face*	50
Posting-house at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle	,,	50
Plan of Sainte-Ménehould in 1791		59
Posting-house at Sainte-Ménehould		61
Doorway of the Posting-house at Sainte-Ménehould		63
Posting-house at Orbeval	*To face*	66
Posting-house at Clermont-en-Argonne	,,	66

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

		PAGE
Plan of Varennes in 1791		72
Guillaume	*To face*	76
Hôtel du Grand Monarque at Varennes		80
Rue de la Basse Cour and Sauce's House at Varennes		84
Préfontaine's House at Varennes	*To face*	86
Bridge over the Aire at Varennes	,,	86
Sauce's House		90
Goguelat	*To face*	92
Lane of La Vérade behind Sauce's House		94
Grease-pot from the old Posting-house at Meaux		120
Town-hall at Châlons-sur-Marne	*To face*	128
The Upper Town of Varennes	,,	128
Room in Sauce's House where the Royal Family spent the night		138
Préfontaine's House, and the Road from Varennes to Clermont		143
Town-hall at Sainte-Ménehould		149
M. de Dampierre's Château at Hans	*To face*	150
The Porte Saint-Croix at Châlons-sur-Marne	,,	150
Scene of M. de Dampierre's death		154
The Prefecture at Châlons-sur-Marne		158
Old Intendant's House at Châlons-sur-Marne		160
Barnave	*To face*	172
Pétion	,,	182
Posting-house at Dormans		184
Farm of Le Chêne-Fendu		186
Posting-house at Port-à-Binson		191
Old Hôtel du Louvre at Dormans		194
Dormans from the Marne		197
Régnard de l'Isle's House at Ferté-sous-Jouarre		202
Bishop's Palace at Meaux		204
Louis XVI.'s Room in the Bishop's Palace at Meaux		206
Marie Antoinette. From a portrait by Vigée le Brun	*To face*	212

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Léonard . . . . . *To face* 224

Yard of the Posting-house at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle 226

Sign of the *Hôtel Grand Monarque* 229

Newspaper showing the marks of Marat's blood . . . *To face* 234

J. B. Sauce 239

House in which Sauce died 249

Etienne Radet . . . . . *To face* 256

Drouet's Seal 272

The Aire at Varennes 305

Tower of St. Gengoult and *Bras d'Or* Inn at Varennes 321

CHAPTER I

COUNT AXEL DE FERSEN

THE name and mould of a hero of romance, regular features, a sensitive mouth, an expression half tender and half bold, a slender figure, and the immense advantage of belonging to that Scandinavian race whose prestige was so irresistible—such, with his eighteen years,[1] was the equipment with which in December, 1773,[2] the Comte de Fersen made his first appearance in Parisian society. For three years he had been travelling about Europe under the guidance of a tutor, paying successive visits of some length to Brunswick, where he had studied "the profession of arms"; to Turin, which excelled in the teaching of philosophy; and to Strasbourg, which boasted of famous schools of medicine, gunnery, and dancing.

When a foreigner, at the close of his student days, came to France to complete his education and acquire the manners of the great world, it was his bounden duty to submit to three ordeals, which for a young man of good breeding at that time took the place, to a certain extent, of our trivial and meaningless Bachelors' Degree. His first care was to be presented to the King's mistress, at that time Mme. du Barry, who received the young Swede very amiably; next, he went to Ferney to pay his respects to M. de Voltaire, who, dressed in a ragged scarlet jacket and woollen stockings drawn up over his

[1] Jean Axel de Fersen was born on the 4th Sept. 1755. His father was Field Marshal Frédéric Axel de Fersen, his mother was the Comtesse Hedvig Delagardie.—Archives of the War Office.

[2] See *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France.* Extract from the papers of the Grand Marshal Count Jean Axel de Fersen, published by his great-nephew the Baron R. M. de Klinckowström.

small-clothes, grimaced and moaned, told the whole history of his last dose of medicine, and ended by producing his habitual guests—his niece, thirty watchmakers, and a Jesuit father. Finally, he appeared at the Opera Ball. This last ordeal, the most important and decisive of all, was for Fersen an occasion of triumph. The Dauphine, Marie Antoinette, who was present, though masked, *drew him out* for nearly a quarter of an hour without his suspecting the greatness of his good fortune. Satisfied at last by his answers, she removed her velvet domino and revealed her identity; whereupon a great sensation followed; and such was the eagerness of the crowd that her Highness was obliged to take refuge in one of the boxes. Fersen went home at three o'clock in the morning, dazzled, fascinated, entranced. This evening was the turning-point of his whole life.

He saw the Princess several times again, in her own apartments at Versailles, where he proved himself to be discreet and prudent, almost timid. She treated him "extremely well." That is all that is known, and there is no authority for supposing anything more. But it is impossible to avoid noticing the coincidence of two dates. On the 10th May, 1774, Louis XV. died and the Dauphine became the Queen, and it was on the 12th that Fersen left Paris [1] on the spur of the moment, as though someone had made him understand, or he had seen for himself, that his constant attentions would give occasion for comment among the ill-natured. The Swedish Ambassador, the Comte de Creutz, seems to have

[1] He stayed for a time in London, and returned to Sweden at the beginning of the year 1775. A few months later the Duc d'Ostrogothie, brother of Gustave III, fell passionately in love with Fersen's sister. In the letters of Gustave III to the Comtesse de Boufflers are the following words, under the date of Oct. 18, 1776: "My brother, the Duc d'Ostrogothie, has been travelling since the month of May. . . . I had to let him go, to get over an ardent passion with which the fair Fersen has inspired him. She is the daughter of the famous Comte de Fersen, who has been three times Marshal of the Diet, and I must admit that she is very capable of inspiring passion: for she has not only an extremely pleasing face, but also every kind of charm, as well as a keen intellect."—*Actes de l'Académie Nationale de Bordeaux.* 3rd Series. 60th year, 1898.

This passion was destined to be short-lived. On the 2nd Oct. 1777 the Comtesse de Boufflers answered King Gustave: "M. le Duc d'Ostrogothie has cured himself of one passion by another; they say he has fallen deeply in love at Lyons with Mlle. de Foll, who is a charming person."

known the true motives for his departure. "It is not possible," he informs Gustave III, "to behave more wisely or discreetly"; and one may detect a hint to the same effect in the correspondence of this date between Mercy and Maria Theresa. Mercy speaks of the new sovereign's fears "of being scolded about the little matters connected with her occupations and amusements"; and the Empress, alluding to the sacrifices forced upon her daughter by her new duties, answers: "I have no doubt that her light-hearted days are over; over still earlier than mine were."

Fersen's absence lasted for more than four years. When he reappeared at Versailles in August, 1778, he was received with joy. "The Queen, who is charming," he writes, "said when she saw me, 'Ah! this is an old acquaintance.'" A few days later he observes: "The Queen, who is the prettiest and most lovable princess I know, has been good enough to inquire often about me. She asked Creutz why I did not come to her Sunday card-parties, and on hearing that I had gone one day when there was no play, she made me a kind of apology." In his letters to his father this is the favourite theme: he returns to it a few days later. "The Queen continues to show me kindness: I often go to pay my court to her at her card-party, and every time she speaks a few words full of friendliness to me. Someone having spoken to her of my Swedish uniform, she showed a great desire to see me in this costume; I am to go on Tuesday dressed in this way, not to the Court, but to the Queen's own apartments. She is the most lovable princess I know."[1]

And yet it was no later than the following winter, at the very moment when Fersen was declaring that "his stay in France was becoming pleasanter every day, and that Paris was a charming place," that he decided suddenly on a renewed absence, and asked leave to accompany the expedition of French troops to America. The Court chattered about it for a week: the favour with which the handsome Swede was received by the Queen made a scandal among all the gossips of Versailles; they spoke of meetings, of glances exchanged

[1] *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, Introduction, pp. xxxii and xxxiii.

in default of conversation during the informal evenings at Trianon. "The Queen had been seen," they declared, "while singing to the piano those passionate couplets from the opera *Dido*—

'Ah! que je fus bien inspirée
Quand je vous reçus dans ma cour,'

to catch Fersen's eye with ill-concealed emotion."[1] Many people consider this gossip to be calumny; but one cannot ignore the authority of a very plainly-expressed letter from the Comte de Creutz to Gustave III, the original of which is preserved among the King's private papers in the Archives of Upsal.

"I must tell your Majesty in confidence that the young Comte de Fersen has been so much in favour with the Queen that it has given offence to several people. I confess that I cannot help believing that she was attracted by him: I saw symptoms of this too unmistakable to leave any doubt. The behaviour of the young Comte de Fersen on this occasion was admirable in its modesty and reserve and, above all, in his determination to go to America. By absenting himself he warded off the danger; but it required resolution beyond his years to withstand this temptation. The Queen could not take her eyes off him during the last days, and as they looked at him they were full of tears. I implore your Majesty to share this secret with no one but Senator Fersen. As soon as the departure of the Count was made public all the favourites were delighted about it. The Duchesse de Fitz-James said to him: '*What, Monsieur! you are forsaking your conquest in this way?*' '*If I had made one I should not forsake her,*' he answered. '*I am going away free, and, unhappily, without leaving any regrets behind me.*' Your Majesty will admit that this answer was wise and prudent beyond his years."

No doubt: but that *unhappily* is more significant than it looks: it is the public avowal of Fersen's love for the Queen of France. It is a pretty scene, and there is nothing in it with which to find fault except the inexpressible assurance

[1] See Geoffroy, *Gustave III et la Cour de France.*

of the Duchesse de FitzJames, and the insolent satisfaction that she obviously feels in meddling with the royal idyll.

Fersen returned from America in the month of June, 1783, just in time to receive an order to accompany his King, Gustave III, on the journey he was undertaking to Germany, Italy, and France. The favour in which the young officer was held was thereby increased. As he had no fortune, Louis XVI appointed him *colonel propriétaire*[1] of the Royal Swedish Regiment, granting him 8,000 *livres* in the form of pay, with an additional income of 12,000 *livres*, and a *brevet de retenue* for 100,000 *livres*.[2] He was at the same time a lieutenant-colonel on active service in the light horse of the King of Sweden, which obliged him to divide the year between the two countries. But he had more ties in Paris than in Stockholm; he knew everyone in the place. When the women discussed him among themselves they were agreed on one point—that he had aged very much and that he was no longer handsome, a certain sign that each of them individually considered his appearance to be extremely

[1] 21*st September* 1783. "Comte de Fersen (Axel), born Sept. 4th, 1755; was a captain in the service of Sweden; rank of colonel, June 20th, 1780.

Lieut.-Colonel (*Mestre de Camp en second*) of the Royal Deux Ponts Regiment, 27th Jan., 1782.

Colonel (*Mestre de Camp propriétaire*) of the same 21st Sept., 1783.

1781. Distinguished himself at the siege of Yorktown.

1785. A very zealous, active, and resolute officer, who busies himself untiringly in the instruction of the officers.

30th June, 1784. Granted extra pay to the amount of 8,000 francs as *Mestre de Camp propriétaire*.

30th June, 1786. Cross of Military Merit (Order of St. Louis for Protestants).

30th June, 1784. The King grants a pension of 20,000 *livres* to M. le Comte de Fersen, Colonel of the Royal Swedish Regiment.

N.B. This pension of 20,000 *livres* will include the 8,000 already granted to this officer.

30th June, 1784. Royal Swedish Regiment. M. le Comte de Fersen was appointed Colonel of this regiment on the 21st Sept., 1783, on the resignation of M. le Comte de Sparre, Brigadier General, and that of the Comte Ernest de Sparre, who had been promised the colonelcy of this regiment.

The Comte de Fersen gave the sum of 100,000 *livres* to the Comte Alexandre de Sparre, Colonel.

His Majesty grants the Comte de Fersen a *brevet de retenue* for the said sum of 100,000 *livres*, to secure his being reimbursed by any officer who should happen to be appointed colonel of the said regiment. The Comte de Fersen has no fortune."—Archives of the War Office.

[2] (The word *livre*, as used throughout this book, denotes an obsolete coin of nearly the same value as a franc.—*Translator's Note.*)

attractive. He gave rise to much astonishment by refusing the wealthiest heiresses, one after another: first a Swede, Mlle. de Leigel, who married an English nobleman; then Mlle. Necker, who, as all the world knows, married young Staël. Staël was a compatriot and very intimate friend of Fersen, to whom the young lady's hand had been offered. It was even noticed[1] that the Queen took a marked interest in Staël's marriage, and furthered it by persuading Gustave III to give the post of Swedish Ambassador in Paris to the bridegroom elect. At the very beginning of the Revolution, Staël, influenced by his wife, took the side of the enemies of the royal family, and Gustave III, distrusting his ambassador, corresponded with Louis XVI, to whom he remained much attached, through the medium of Fersen.

The latter settled definitely in Paris at the beginning of 1790. He had the entire confidence of Marie Antoinette. "This confidence is all the more flattering," he writes to his father, "from the fact that it is shared only by three or four persons, of whom I am the youngest." He might have said that he shared it with none, since from the others—the Marquis de Bouillé, the Baron de Breteuil, and a little later Goguelat—certain secrets were withheld; and, moreover, being tied to the provinces, they were not, like himself, constant in their attentions at the Tuileries. He visited the Queen at all hours: sometimes he passed the afternoon with her, and returned after the *coucher* at eleven or twelve o'clock at night. She consulted him and listened to his advice: he was the only friend that remained to her; perhaps the only friend she ever had.

The life of the poor woman was terrible in its isolation. She was taken from her mother as a mere child—she was fourteen years old!—and, judging from her own letters and those of Mercy, one may confidently say that she had been very docile in her efforts to love her husband, but had not altogether succeeded. Whom then should she love? Her world at Versailles was composed of coxcombs used to easy

[1] The Queen's attachment to Fersen was giving rise to gossip. In the *Correspondance Secrète* of Lescure we read under the date of May 8th, 1786: "The departure of the Comte de Fersen, a Swede, has made some sensation in the immediate circle of the Queen; but the clouds that his absence has produced there will soon be dissipated."

COUNT AXEL DE FERSEN.
From a Miniature painted in 1783.

victories; her madcap brother-in-law, whose follies she dreaded; the rogue de Tilly, who was her page; the daring Besenval, who blurted out his audacious speeches with the excuse that a soldier was always blunt; Vaudreuil, affected, sceptical, and languishing; Lauzun, whom she was actually obliged to dismiss from her presence.[1] All of them made court to her, and the marvel is that one should be able to assert, notwithstanding their innuendoes and slyly hinted mysteries, that not one of these puppets tarnished "the white soul of the Queen."

But later on, in 1790, at the Tuileries, the friends in whom she trusted had forsaken her: her former courtiers had fled; their chattering tongues were no longer there to cheat the deep silence in her heart. Every day increased the solitude in which she was being submerged. She who had inherited from her heroic mother the need for great actions and the fire of noble passions, was condemned to inactivity of heart and mind: she was thirty-five years old, and had known neither the joys of love, nor the sweetness of friendship, nor the pride of ruling. What a mockery was this life of hers! "I know," she writes to her brother, "that it is the duty of kings to suffer for others, but verily we do it thoroughly!" It was then that Fersen reappeared, hiding "a fiery soul under a crust of ice"; proud, brave, serious, and so different from other men! He had loved her for seventeen years: she saw him every day; he was the only one to do her service; she trusted none but him, and he lived for her alone. Was it possible that she should long be indifferent to him?[2]

[1] "Lauzun, after having dared, in his overweening vanity, to pose as an admirer of the Queen and to offer her a heron's plume that he had worn, carried his infatuation to the point of making her a declaration. Thunderstruck by the energetic *Go, Sir*, which she indignantly flung at him, he left the palace with his head hanging and with rage in his heart."—*Histoire de Marie Antoinette*, by Maxime de la Rocheterie. In the unpublished manuscript notes on Fersen possessed by a member of his family in Sweden reference is made to a duel between Fersen and Lauzun: might it not be on the occasion of this scene that the duel took place?—(Information from private sources.)

[2] In order to discredit from the outset any too venturesome interpretation, we will here quote the evidence of the two persons who are best informed as to what is known of the kind of affection that existed between Marie Antoinette and the Comte de Fersen. One of them, the Baron de F. A—, "sole descendant of Count Axel," and owner of the greater part

THE FLIGHT OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

Stern History is fenced about with a curious kind of reserve. Since it is her business to gather up the facts born of the conflicting passions of humanity, she generally despises love as a worthless factor, useful, at its best, for supplying situations to writers of comic opera; and since her main object is to make us believe that events are prosaically produced by the unprejudiced reason of diplomatists and the wisdom of politicians, she is apt to depict the latter as colourless phantoms whose interference is for the most part uncertain and unjustified. It is true that if love is the prime motive power it is also the prime secret; and since no formal report of its great events has ever been drawn up, and no chart exists to tell us how heavily a given woman's smile or a given provocative glance has weighed upon the earth, it

of his papers, notably "of that portion of his journal that extends from 1780 to June, 1791, a portion that Fersen himself believed to be lost"—the Baron de F. A. writes: "I assert that the Count was never anything but the most loyal and respectful confidant of the Queen of France."

The second witness is A. Geoffroy, the author of one of the best and most trustworthy of histories, *Gustave III et la Cour de France*. Geoffroy collected the materials for his work in Sweden: there can be no doubt that he knew those papers of Fersen's that are in the possession of M. de Klinckowström, papers of which a portion only has been published. Speaking of the devotion of the faithful Swede, he observes: "This devotion must strike us as being chivalrous and sincere: we can trace it from the first youthful impression, which doubtless made way, when the hour of trouble came, for a feeling of tender adoration; but nowhere do we find, either in the various authorities that are still unpublished or in the printed documents, any certain proof that this feeling ever ceased to be respectful."

It will be objected that in the so-called *Mémoires de Lord Holland* the following words are found, and are retained by Louis Blanc: "Mme. Campan whispered a very curious revelation, to the effect that Fersen was in the Queen's bedroom, quite alone with her, during the famous night of the 6th Oct. (1789). He had much difficulty in evading detection (at the time when the palace was invaded by the people), and only succeeded in doing so by the help of a disguise that Mme. Campan herself procured for him. This, great as was his repugnance in repeating anecdotes that might lessen the respect felt for the royal family, M. de Talleyrand told me twice, and declared that he had heard the facts from Mme. Campan's own mouth." But in the *Mémoires de Madame Campan* (6th edition, Brussels, 1823, vol. ii, p. 125) there is a note protesting against this assertion, and declaring that it was with feelings of equal indignation and pain that Mme. Campan had read what was put forward on her authority as worthy of belief. The same story is refuted in the *Correspondance entre Mirabeau et le Comte de la Mark*. Geoffroy's words are true. There will never be any *certain proofs* that Fersen's affection for the Queen of France ever ceased to be respectful, and in considering the mutual expression of that affection, even in the most significant manifestations of it, we must always remember the romanticism, the demonstrativeness, the *sensibility* that were fashionable at the time.

behoves us, in a matter of this kind, to proceed with caution.

When we are concerned with Marie Antoinette, whose sorrows have invested her with a sacred halo, such an inquiry seems to call for still greater delicacy: one feels a certain respectful embarrassment in probing the mysteries of a heart that so many tears have made holy, and even the least hurtful of the possible hypotheses seems a matter for remorse. But we have our "authorities." Sixty years ago a registrar at Orléans, M. Bimbenet, while cataloguing the archives of the Royal Court, discovered the remains of the papers connected with the proceedings instituted in 1791 against the accomplices in the flight to Varennes, who were arraigned before a High Court of Justice.[1] The proceedings were interrupted by the Amnesty, and the unused documents lay there, forgotten for half a century, in the attics of the Law Courts. Among these records are seven letters addressed to Fersen by a woman whose name is unknown, which reached Paris after the 21st June, 1791, the date on which he left France. These letters, which were opened by the Committee of Inquiries and handed over to the examining magistrates, were never sent to Fersen, and were left in the portfolio.

The indefinable but most attractive charm that pervades old letters is due, we may be very sure, to the fact that they retain a little of the life of those who penned them, and in reading them one retrieves, though in a blurred and vague form, the joy or pain that they once conveyed. In the act of opening the old letters that one sometimes finds, still

[1] Bimbenet's work was published in 1844 with the title, *Faithfu Narrative of the Flight of King Louis XVI and his Family to Varennes, founded on the legal and official Documents, and on the Papers seized in the Houses of MM. de Bouillé, de Fersen, de Klinglin, de Goguelat, de Malden, de Valory, de Moustier, and other Persons indicted before the National High Court provisionally established at Orléans, deposited in the Record Office of that Court.* By M. Eugène Bimbenet, Chief Registrar, Recorder of the Royal Court of Orléans, guardian and custodian of these documents.

A second edition was brought out in 1868, which was much more complete and more valuable, in that it reproduced the full text of the documents. It was entitled, *Flight of Louis XVI to Varennes, according to the legal and official Documents deposited in the Record Office of the National High Court established at Orléans.* By Eugène Bimbenet, formerly Chief Registrar of the Imperial Court of Orléans. Our references are to this second edition, unless it is stated to the contrary.

sealed, in portfolios of ancient records, one feels that from their folds there is escaping something inviolate that will never return, the last breath of a vanished life, which has lain there asleep for more than a century: and letters that have been stopped, or seized, or lost on the way, are peculiarly touching, for, notwithstanding all the passion they were written with and all the agony with which they were awaited, they have never been read by those who expected them; they have never said what they had to say. They seem to be souls in torment, grieving because they are condemned, for ever aimless and astray, to be seen only by inquisitive and indifferent eyes.

In spite of their deliberate obscurity and circumlocutions, the seven letters of the *Unknown* reveal, as completely as one can desire, the story of two hearts that loved, but loved with a difference. Who was she? A Frenchwoman, evidently well born, attached to the service of an *emigrée* princess in England: it was there that she was in June, 1791, with her husband, a man who was often ill and always doleful, whom nevertheless she proposed to carry off to Sweden, where she hoped soon to find Fersen. Had the latter been her lover? There is nothing to make this certain, but it seems extremely probable: the intimacy between them is very great: she knows certain ladies whom he has loved in the past, she guesses at others and speaks of them with some asperity. She loves him ardently; she thinks him the handsomest, the most lovable, the tenderest, the bravest, the most considerate of heroes, and has by no means hidden from him that this is her point of view. He at first was gracious enough, thinking it a case of caprice only, but he soon perceived that he had inspired love in good earnest, and love of a most enthusiastic and headstrong quality, with which he did not wish to burden himself at any price, being himself absorbed by the passion that changed the course of his life and engrossed his whole soul. Being as frank as he was proud, he could not endure that she who is to us the *Unknown*[1] should be betrayed into

[1] "It would have been possible, by means of the coat-of-arms of M. de Fersen's correspondent, which were clearly reproduced on her seal, to discover her name. This we omitted to do. Proper names should be left in

a love to which he could not respond. He confided the truth to her: he loved the Queen, loved her respectfully, devotedly, with a love that was overwhelming, profound, infinite; he loved her only the more since she was lonely and unhappy, and he had sworn to himself to save her. The *Unknown* strove to silence her heart—which would not be silenced, but gave vent to pitious lamentations. Each of these two played a fine part: Fersen, so confident of the loyalty of a woman whom he knows to be passionate and jealous that he trusts her with his dangerous secret; and she, so brave and resigned that she is able to forget self entirely and to hope that the man she loves so ardently may find happiness through another.

But what is more important is that these letters give us complete information on several points; and first, that Fersen, with the sublime cruelty of indifference, makes a stipulation with the *Unknown* that she shall no longer weary him with her love. The poor woman meekly tries to be resigned.

"I wish to see you again soon at Stockholm, in the character of a dearly-loved brother: I have no longer any other feeling for you: I have made that painful effort to obey you."

And further on:

"You ought to be pleased with me; I have now reached the state that you wished, that you insisted on. . . . I do not mean to have any feeling but friendship for you any more; I ought never to have had any other feeling, or at least I should have kept it at the bottom of my heart. That is the greatest sacrifice that I can make for you; it has cost me a great deal to take this course, and I did not wish to mention it to you before I was sure of myself. . . . You will be my only friend; my happiness will be in writing to you; but I shall no longer let you read my heart; that is the only secret that I shall keep to myself." [1]

She is jealous, however, though she dares not admit it, so much afraid is she of displeasing him!

obscurity when the documents are sufficiently authentic to establish a historical fact, especially when this fact is connected with some circumstance of private life."—Bimbenet, 1st edition, p. 44 (note).

[1] Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 135.

"Some Frenchmen whom I saw yesterday told me that it was you who escorted your King and some other people too: I think that whoever has the good fortune to enjoy your care and friendship is more than happy. . . . You are never out of my thoughts: everything tends in that direction, and it is all that I live by."

She refers to the Queen by the words *a certain person*, or *the person to whom you are attached;* and it would seem that the intimacy between Marie Antoinette and Fersen was no longer a secret in the circle of the *emigrés.*

"My husband has been telling me that you have been much blamed for your line of conduct, and that you have done and are still doing a great wrong to a certain person whom you are subjecting to the scorn of the public; that everyone who has spoken to him about it has expressed surprise at your want of consideration for her reputation, and that you are ruining her entirely with those who might take some interest in her, not to speak of the fact that you are actually endangering her life. I argued about it with my husband, for I regard the matter quite otherwise, and I think that at this moment you cannot do too much to prove your devotion to her, by never leaving her and by giving her every token of it that lies in your power. And the very course of action that they blame in you and think wrong, I for my part consider sublime, and can only respect you the more for it."

Moreover, she knows that he is perfectly happy.

"I am satisfied with your happiness, and no longer desire my own."

If one were to sift in the same way the numerous letters sent by Fersen to Marie Antoinette and the notes in which she replied, one would find a thousand indications—well worth the trouble of collecting—of a very great intimacy. He, who even in his despatches in cipher never omits to address his correspondents in the most formal terms, writes to the Queen in a tone of absolute familiarity. "I am sending you a line. . . ."[1] "When you write to me, you had better. . . ."[2] "You absolutely must be rescued from your present

[1] *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, ii, p. 196.
[2] *Idem*, ii, p. 200.

state. . . ."[1] "You see from the letter of the King of Prussia. . . ."[2] The Queen's notes are very affectionate; there is one injunction that is constantly repeated: "Do not disturb yourself. . . . Do not torment yourself too much on my account. . . ."[3] Often, too, she expresses this desire: "When shall we see each other in peace?" At other times she ends thus: "Farewell, I am altogether yours,"[4] or again: "Farewell, my dear Rignon [which is one of the names she gives him]; I embrace you very tenderly."[5] For the writing of this one she employed the hand of a confidant, for in the notes penned entirely by herself Fersen, who had not the courage to destroy them, erased everything of an intimate nature in such a way that it is impossible to decipher a single letter."[6]

Later on, when they were separated, she tried to communicate with him through Count Valentine Esterhazy, the Governor of Valenciennes, whom she knew to be a friend of Fersen. "If you are writing to HIM," she says to Esterhazy, "tell HIM that no number of hours and no number of countries can separate hearts; I feel that truth more every day." A few weeks later the Queen writes: "I am delighted to find this opportunity of sending you a little ring, which is certain to give you pleasure. A prodigious number of them have been sold here during the last three days, and now it gives one a world of trouble to find one. The one that is wrapped in paper is for HIM; give it into HIS hands for me. It is exactly

[1] *Idem*, ii, p. 166.
[2] *Idem*, ii, p. 145.
[3] *Idem*, ii, p. 318.
[4] *Idem*, ii, p. 328.
[5] ("Rignon" was not a nickname bestowed upon Fersen by the Queen, but a fictitious name she employed to deceive the revolutionary spies when writing letters—ostensibly from one man to another on business matters—while she was a prisoner in the Tuileries. The letters to "M. Rignon" were written in the ordinary way, while the letters from the Queen to Fersen were written between the lines in white ink. "I embrace you tenderly," therefore, was not written by the Queen *in propriâ personâ*, but by the imaginary correspondent of the imaginary M. Rignon—for which reason Fersen probably thought it unnecessary to erase the words. See the Diary and Correspondence of Count Axel Fersen.—*Translator's Note.*)
[6] An article by M. Pierre Giffard (*Le Matin*, July 23, 1903) gives some curious details as to the fate of these manuscripts. All the letters of Marie Antoinette and all the papers of Fersen possessed by M. de Klinckowström were on the point of being burnt by that gentleman four years ago, in the fear that some process of modern chemistry might succeed in rendering transparent the enormous erasures that were so abundant in these writings.

the right size for him. I wore it for two days before packing it. Tell HIM it is from me. I do not know where he is: it is a horrible martyrdom to have no news, and not even to know where those one loves are living. . . ."[1]

Thus one may follow the phases of this mutual affection, which in the life of the Queen was, as it were, a last warm ray of the setting sun, and did not fail to exert a special influence on the course of the Revolution; for, indeed, Fersen was the most active agent in the flight of the King. He feared for the woman he loved, and on the subject of the dangers that threatened her his passion saw further and more shrewdly than the experience of the most subtle politicians. No sooner was the flight decided upon than he devoted himself entirely to making preparations. His activity was incredible: with Bouillé and Choiseul he arranged the disposition of the troops; studied, stage by stage, the route that was to be taken; and taxed his ingenuity in procuring a false passport for the royal family. Two friends, both foreigners, lent him their names for the most dangerous part of the proceedings: one was English—a little mad, like all Englishmen of that time—and was called Quintin Crawfurd[2]; the other was a Russian lady, the Baroness de Korff,[3] who lived on the Quai Malaquais in the fine house

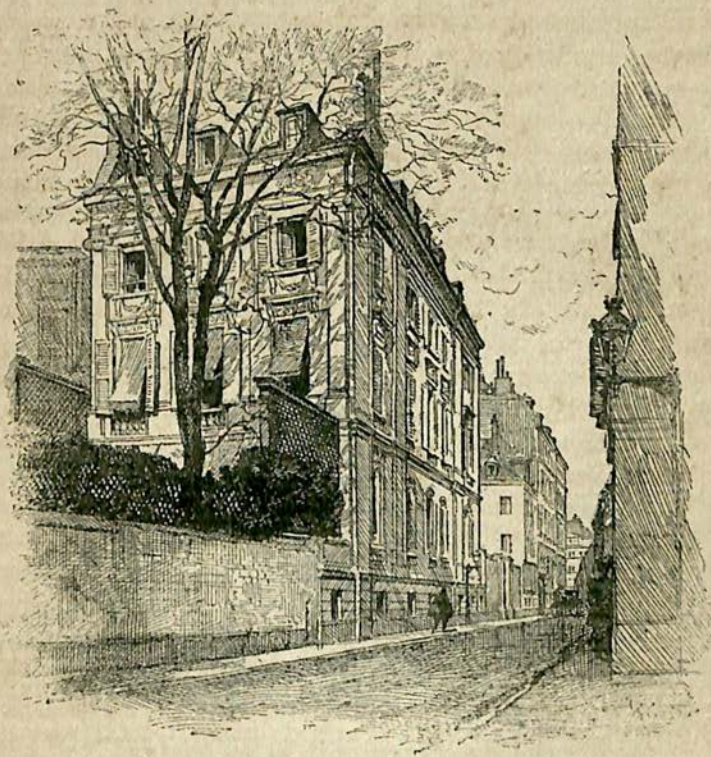
[1] These two letters were shown to me by M. Ernest Daudet, to whom I now tender my sincere thanks. M. Daudet has seen a photograph of the two rings: they are of plain gold, with an oblong stone. On the stone of one are engraved three fleurs-de-lis: on the other is this inscription: *Lâche qui les abandonne* (He is a coward who deserts them). There is nothing to show which of the two was destined for Fersen. One thing only is certain, that he never received it. See the *Figaro* of April 16, 1904.

[2] Quintin Crawfurd, born at Kilwinnick in the county of Ayr on the 22nd September, 1743. He had a considerable fortune. "He had collected in Florence, Venice, and, above all, in Rome, pictures and statues of priceless worth. The house in which he placed all these valuable possessions was furnished with equal taste and magnificence. Mr. Crawfurd was one of that small number of men to whose honour, devotion, and fidelity the secret of the journey to Varennes had been confided. The carriage that had been built for the purpose was left at his house in the Rue de Clichy for several days before the start."—*Notice sur M. Crawfurd*, in the preface to the *Mémoires de Madame du Hausset*.

The carriage only remained at Crawfurd's house for a few hours. Crawfurd published a *Notice sur Marie Antoinette*, of which no doubt very few copies were printed, since it is extremely rare.

[3] "Madame de Korff, widow of Colonel de Korff, who was in the service of her Imperial Majesty of Russia and had been killed twenty years earlier

now known as No. 5. Under cover of these two names, Fersen ordered a *berline de voyage*, collected funds, and corresponded with the Courts of Austria, Sweden, and Spain. Every day he was at the Tuileries, superintending the smallest details. He it was who, little by little, carried out



FERSEN'S HOUSE IN THE RUE MATIGNON.

of the palace under his arm the clothes and linen that the Queen was to take with her: he arranged about the postillions, the cipher for letters, the proposed restitution of the goods of the clergy, the waiting-women that were to be taken, the convocation of the Parliaments at Metz as soon as

at the assault of Binder, lived in Paris with her mother, Madame Stegleman."—*Archives Impériales de Moscou. Correspondance de l'Ambassadeur Simolin*, 1791.

the King was out of danger, the method of declaring the National Assembly to be illegal and usurpatory—for that was among their plans—and of finally "re-establishing everything as it was before the Revolution"; a Utopian task which Fersen undertook with the naïve assurance of a lover.

He lived in the charming house, at that time a new one, of which the entrance is at No. 17 of the Rue Matignon.[1] His stables were a little higher up on the same side, in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré.[2] There, on the eve of departure, the berline was placed in the coachhouse, loaded with luggage and stocked with provisions for the journey: beef *à la mode* and cold veal, which Fersen himself placed in the carriage, together with a bag of small change for use at the posting-houses, a bottle of still champagne, and five bottles of water.[3] Nothing is more striking than the contrast between the triviality of these petty details and the importance of the projected event, which was expected to be even more tragic than it actually was; for the King and his circle were persuaded that his departure would result in a conflagration, and that they would only return to Paris to find it in ruins.

The flight, according to the agreement between Fersen and Bouillé, who commanded the troops of the Eastern division, had been fixed for the 6th June. But various considerations, especially the presence of a "very democratic woman-of-the-bedchamber" who was leaving the Queen's service on the 11th, contributed to the postponement of the scheme: the 12th was chosen, but "the wretched woman" prolonged her

[1] ". . . Rue Matignon, the first gateway on the right as you come in by the Rue (du Faubourg) Saint-Honoré." Statement of Pierre Lecomte, coachman.—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 28.

[2] ". . . the stables of the Comte de Fersen, situated in the Grande Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, with three entrance-gates above the Rue Matignon." Statement of Jean Louis, carriage-builder.—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 51. The following question was put to the Queen by the Revolutionary Tribunal: "Was it not Fersen who lived in Paris in the Rue du Bac?"—"Yes," answered the prisoner. Fersen lived in the Rue Matignon. It was Staël, the Swedish Ambassador, who lived in the Rue du Bac.

[3] "A piece of beef *à la mode* that I had put into the carriage."—*Journal de Fersen.* Klinckowström, ii, p. 8. Moustier (*Relation*) mentions the other provisions.

term of service till the 20th,[1] and the journey was finally fixed for that day. It was a Monday.

[1] *The Comte de Fersen to the Marquis de Bouillé*, 29th May, 1791. "The start is fixed for the 12th of next month. Everything was ready, and they were to have started on the 6th or 7th, but the two millions (from the Civil List) are only due on the 7th or 8th. There is, moreover, among the Dauphin's attendants a very democratic waiting-woman, who is only leaving on the 11th. . . . "

From the same to the same, 7th June. "Nothing is changed. The journey is fixed for the 19th; if this were to be altered I would let you know by the mail of the 11th. . . . "

From the same to the same, 13th June. "The departure is fixed for certain for the 20th at midnight. A wretched woman-of-the-bedchamber of the Dauphin's, who cannot be got rid of and is only leaving on the Monday morning, has made it necessary to postpone till Monday evening; but you may count upon that date. . . . "

In the *Mémoires secrets et universels des malheurs et de la mort de la reine de France*, which must only be consulted with caution, but in which there are many traditions and much tittle-tattle of an interesting nature, we read (p. 133 *et seq*) the following dramatic anecdote about the "wretched woman" so much feared by Fersen. "The Queen, in spite of her kindness and generosity to the women of her bedchamber, knew full well, to her sorrow, that these women were not all equally devoted to her. Madame Rochereuil, who was entrusted with the care of her baths and with the key of the smaller apartments, had almost adopted the new ideas; and the fear of losing her post would never have made her consent to the removal of the Court. It would take infinite skill to evade her constant watchfulness: a sort of royal conspiracy was necessary to make it possible to cross the passage near her room, between eleven o'clock and midnight, without disturbing her slumbers and rousing her suspicions.

"On the morning of the day fixed for the journey the Queen and the King entered the room of this lady, who through her windows in the *entresol* was able to see into the two courts of the Tuileries. The King, sitting down, began to speak of her health, as though it were the health of a person he honoured and felt affection for. He seemed to be struck with the pleasant position of this room, and expressed an intention of taking it some day for himself, in exchange for one that overlooked the garden. After walking to and fro for some time about these rooms, which were next to the Queen's antechamber, Louis XVI said to the woman-of-the-bedchamber, 'Goodbye, Madame Rochereuil; always be true to your poor mistress; we, for our part, have a sincere affection for you. You complain that your appetite has failed: all these disturbances are the cause of it. To-day I will send you a tart from my table.' "

And accordingly, after the King's dinner, Madame Rochereuil received the pastry. Her great-grandparents had served Louis XIV, and she was accustomed to the extreme graciousness of her employers; but nevertheless she was certain in her suspicious mind that the King's visit required some explanation over and above its ostensible motive. His words seemed to be lacking in spontaneity, and disconnected. The Queen, to judge from her expression, was alive to the necessity for caution; she was absent-minded and to a certain extent agitated. Gorsas' journal spoke a little time ago of a plan of escape. Can it be that this flight is at hand? Is the King giving me the tart to beguile me and make me drowsy?

Saying this, Madame Rochereuil called her little dog and gave him the dainty to eat. The spaniel, having finished his meal, settled down upon a chair, became drowsy, and fell into the most profound sleep. This

At break of day Fersen was afoot. At eight o'clock he was driven to a banker's in the Rue du Sentier, whence he

illuminating occurrence horrified the woman-of-the-bedchamber, who understood that the royal family had determined on their course of action and that the final catastrophe was at hand. Being agitated and alarmed as to her own future her impulse was to leave the Tuileries, and give the alarm to the authorities. She was held back by feeling the enormity of such ingratitude; but her own interests revived her indignation . . . etc.

It seems almost incredible that anyone should have dared to write these lines after the Restoration, in a volume that was enthusiastically praised by the *Aristarque* and the *Quotidienne*. The anecdote itself has no appearance of truth, but is not out of place in a history that gives us, in the last chapter, a picture of Queen Marie Antoinette dying *of an attack of apoplexy* in the cart that was carrying her to the scaffold.

To return to Mme. Rochëreuil (Ferrières calls her *de Ronchreuil*): we must quote this passage from Madame Campan (*Mémoires*). "After the return from Varennes the Mayor of Paris sent to the Queen a denunciation emanating from her woman-of-the-wardrobe, dated May 21, declaring that preparations were being made in Paris for a journey." This woman, adds V. Fournel (*L'événement de Varennes*, p. 90) who was beloved by Marie Antoinette, derived from her post an income of more than 12,000 francs. She was in communication with the deputies of the *tiers-état*, and M. de Gouvion, Lafayette's aide-de-camp, was her lover.

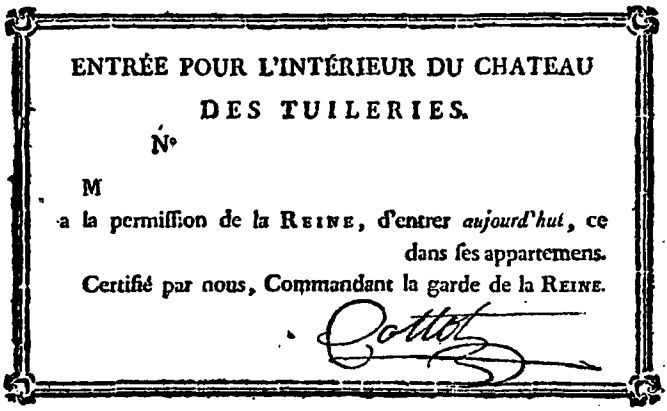
Gouvion, on the 21st June, before the National Assembly, made the following statement: "On Saturday, the vigil of Whitsunday, an officer commanding a battalion of the National Guard came to warn me that some schemes were being formed in the palace by the Queen, who proposed to fly and to take with her M. le Dauphin and Madame Royale . . . I said to him . . . that I should like to see the person who had given him this information . . . The next day, Whitsunday, we went to see this person: she told me that there was in the palace a corridor leading to the rooms of M. de Villequier, and that it was by it that the Queen thought of escaping, and that duplicate keys had been made to the doors that shut it off . . . On Friday, the brother of the same person came to my house, and confirmed everything. I said to him: 'I promised your sister to keep the secret: entreat her to release me from my promise so that I can go and inform *M. le Maire*' . . . I have not seen that person again."—*Parliamentary Archives*, vol. xxvii, p. 370.

It has been further declared that *that person* provided Lafayette with a pattern of the dress that the Queen was to wear on the journey. The fact that one deduces from all these assertions—which are vague enough—is that even among the Queen's personal attendants there were those who were ready to betray her, and that Madame Rochereuil spied upon her mistress for the benefit of the patriots. Fersen, who was kept well informed, was told so by the Queen herself; Mlle. *Rocherette* (*sic*)—this is no doubt a nickname such as was very common in the Queen's circle—Mlle. Rocherette was Gouvion's mistress and told him everything. She only had suspicions. When she was questioned on the day following the King's departure she said horrible things about the Queen: on being asked if she had not heard footsteps passing through that door, and if she had not been afraid to stay where she was and give no alarm, she said that she so often heard footsteps there after the King had gone to bed that they did not strike her as anything out of the way."—(*Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, vol. ii, p. 7.)

returned to his own house in the Rue Matignon.[1] At one o'clock he was in the Rue du Bac, in the house of the Swedish ambassador, where he only stayed for a quarter of an hour.[2] After being again put down at his own house for

In the General Register of the Salaries and Quarters . . . of the Officials in the Queen's Service, National Archives, 0·3793, Madame Hortense Sellier Rochereuil figures in the capacity of *porte-chaise d'affaires*. Her salary was 75 *livres* a month, with 387 *livres*, 14 *sols* in perquisites, making altogether 462 *livres*, 14 *sols*. After July 1791 Madame Rochereuil figures no more on the registers, which proves that she had forfeited the Queen's favour at the time of the flight. She was replaced by a Madame Gameau.

[1] There are still in existence some fragments of the Diary kept by



ENTRÉE POUR L'INTÉRIEUR DU CHATEAU

DES TUILERIES.

N°

M

a la permiſſion de la REINE, d'entrer *aujourd'hui*, ce

dans ſes appartemens.

Certifié par nous, Commandant la garde de la REINE.

CARD OF ADMISSION TO THE QUEEN'S APARTMENTS.

Fersen: here are the hasty notes written during the week that preceded the flight.

Saturday, 11th June.—Lafayette wished to double the guard and have all the carriages at the palace inspected. Montmorin answered: *That would be one more bolt. I will not undertake to speak of it.* M. de Simiane gone to Aix-la-Chapelle, to act as a spy.

Sunday, 12.—The journey is postponed till the 20th: the cause of this is a woman-of-the-bed-chamber.

Monday, 13.—Oath administered to officers. They say the guards are to be doubled and all the carriages inspected.

Thursday, 16.—Went to the Queen at half-past nine. Carried away some baggage myself. They suspect nothing nor do they in the town.

Friday, 17.—Went to Bondy and Bourget. Dined at home.

Saturday, 18.—Was with the Queen from half-past 2 to 6 o'clock. Satisfactory letter from the Emperor.

Sunday, 19.—Saw the King. Brought away 800 *livres* and the seals. Stayed at the palace from 11 o'clock till midnight.—(*Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France.*)

[2] Deposition of Pierre le Comte, coachman.

a time, he drove to the Pont Royal.[1] It transpired afterwards that he visited the Queen to consult with her as to the final arrangements. "We agreed," he observes, "that there was no room for hesitation, and that the journey was bound to take place. We agreed upon the hour, &c., &c. . . . and that if they were stopped my best course would be to go to Brussels and work in their interest, &c., &c. When the King was leaving me he said: *M. de Fersen, whatever may happen to me, I shall never forget all that you have done for me.* The Queen wept much. At six o'clock I left her."[2] Fersen left the palace and returned to his own house in the Rue Matignon; he then went to the Rue de Clichy, to Crawfurd's house, whither he ordered his men to bring the great berline that had been built for the royal family to travel in and had been for the last two days in his stable-yard;[3] at seven o'clock he saw the trunks, the parcels, the silver, and the provisions[4] placed in the boots and under the tarpaulin of the carriage; at eight o'clock he met a hackney-coach in the Rue Marigny, in which he went to the Pont Royal to fetch two of the bodyguard who were in his confidence, Moustier and Valory by name, whom he took back to the Rue Matignon; he despatched them himself, with five horses and his coachman, Balthazar Sapel, to Crawfurd's house, where they were to find the berline and whence they were to take it to the further side of the Faubourg Saint Martin, to the Barrier on the road to Metz. And finally, entering his own house alone, he donned the dress of a coachman, mounted the box of the hackney-coach, and drove it through the streets to the court of the Tuileries, where,

[1] *Idem.*

[2] Fersen's Journal. *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France.*

[3] Deposition of François Roch, forty-five years of age. He saw the carriage pass by, "in shape like a stage-coach, quite new, following the Rue de Miromesnil and the Rue de la Pépinière."

[4] Deposition of Pierre Lecomte. "The deponent observed, among other things, when the said carriage was loaded, that there were three boots with locks and keys, made of sheet-iron or beaten iron, apparently very strong, and about ten inches square; that he, the deponent, was told by the valet to open one of the boots which was fastened with a padlock, and was close to the locker at the back; and that having opened the said boot he had drawn out of it a small chest filled, he surmised, with silver, and that the valet placed a silver cup in the middle of the little chest."—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 29.

putting his cab into line, he took up his position and waited. . . . It may have been about nine o'clock at the latest when he reached the spot; it was barely dark. The hours that he spent there, amid the constant stream of indifferent passers by, the ebb and flow of those who entered or left the palace, the manœuvres of the guard—those hours that he spent there, knowing what he knew, must have been a time of torture, of that terrible torture that must perforce be hidden under an air of unconcern and the outward bearing of an idler.

CHAPTER II

THE FLIGHT

"THE terrible quarter of an hour is drawing near," said Marie Antoinette on the afternoon of the 20th June. And indeed, it seemed impossible that the royal family should succeed in escaping from the Tuileries, for the Parisians were jealously keeping watch over the moribund principle of royalty, of which, though they had humiliated and mangled it, they feared to be bereft, since they still clung to the tradition that it was a protection to them.

The palace was guarded like a prison: national guards, suspicious and uneasy, were at every door: sentinels stood at each exit from the garden; along the river terrace, at intervals of a hundred paces, were sentinels again: six hundred *sectionnaires* surrounded the palace: they patrolled in the courts, on the stairs, in the rooms, in the kitchen. One of these men, who was posted at night in a passage, tells us that he received orders not to sneeze, so thin was the wainscot between him and the Queen's bed. In order that he should make no noise by walking up and down he was provided with a chair, and mounted guard seated.[1]

The private apartments of the royal family—this descrip-

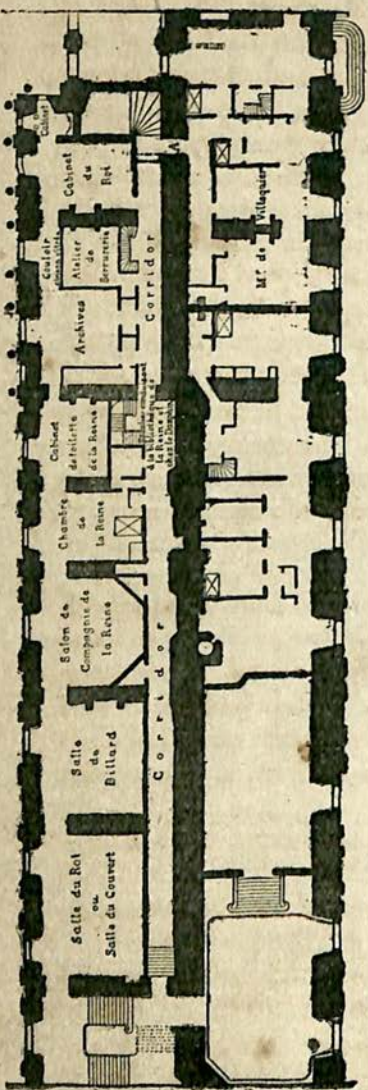
[1] "A Captain of the Guard spent twenty-four consecutive hours in the dark corridor that ran behind the Queen's rooms. He had beside him a table and two candles. This post, which resembled the strictest prison, was by no means coveted: Saint Prix, an actor at the *Comédie Française*, had made it almost entirely his own, and his behaviour while there towards his unhappy sovereigns was always touchingly respectful. It was by this corridor that the King went to the Queen's rooms, and the actor from the *Théâtre Français* often secured for the august and miserable couple the consolation of an interview without witnesses."—*Mémoires de Madame Campan.*

tion is indispensable—looked out over the garden; on the ground-floor was Marie Antoinette's dressing-room, her bedroom, and the drawing-room in which she received her friends; on the *entresol* were the offices, which included the Queen's library, a linen-closet, and also the King's chart-room. Exactly above this *entresol*, on the first story, were the rooms of Madame Royale and the Dauphin, the room in which the King slept, and his great state-room. Two little staircases placed these suites of rooms in direct communication with each other. A long corridor, so dark that even during the day "two smoky lanterns burned" in it, connected the royal apartments on each story, and separated them from the various quarters that faced the Carrousel: these, which were allotted to the gentlemen and ladies in waiting, had no connection with this passage; but the glazed doors of the ground-floor and some little flights of two or three steps gave each of them a private entrance into the court. Above these, on the first story, were the state apartments, all facing the Carrousel: the ambassadors' gallery, the council-room, the throne-room, the *Œil-de-Boeuf*, the hall of the Swiss Guards, etc.

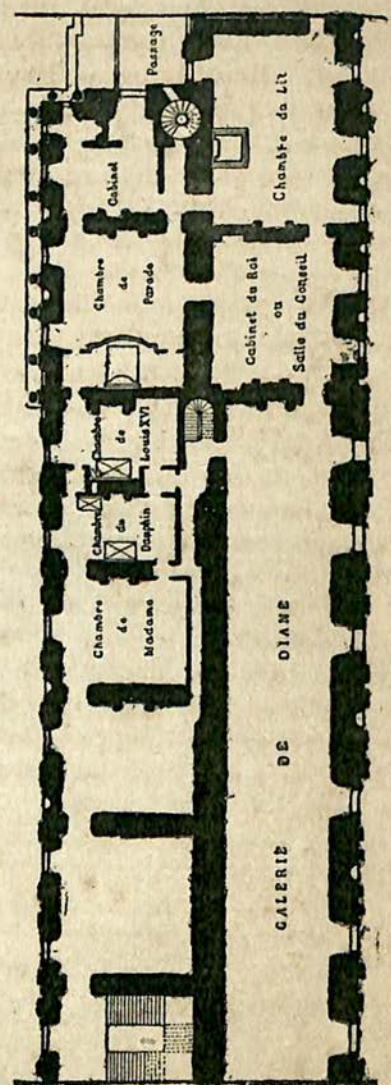
In 1791, this immense labyrinth of magnificent apartments and dark corners was not large enough for the population who occupied it. Two thousand persons, without counting the guard, were lodged in it. At night they slept anywhere. A certain Marquant, page of the King's bedchamber, lived in the council-room, supped there, made his bed and slept there. Brown, a house-porter, spread his mattress in the gallery, where there lay near him "two messengers whose names he did not know." Every morning these good folk made their toilet, arranged their hair, and ate their breakfast under the eyes of the Psyches and Dianas painted by Mignard in the Olympus of the ceiling. The billiard-room served as a dormitory for Pierre Hubert, Péradon, and other pages of the palace[1]; and at Madame Elizabeth's very door a chasseur

[1] List of the effects that the Sieur Le Pan, page of the Palace of Versailles, had in the Palace of the Tuileries, of which some were in a chest of drawers in the King's own billiard-room—a room that was apportioned to the pages of the palace while on duty, whether by day or night—and some in a large chest placed in the embrasure of the first window in the gallery.—*National Archives.* T. 1077.[2]

made his bed every evening. The place was all confusion, a swarm of servants of every degree, valets, scrubbers, water-



PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES IN 1791. A MARKS THE DOOR BETWEEN THE ROYAL APARTMENTS AND M. DE VILLEQUIER'S ROOMS.



PLAN OF THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES IN 1791.

carriers, turnspits, housekeepers, keepers of the robes, who themselves had their maids and their cooks. This army

lived in a state of useless inaction, indifferent to everything that did not strictly concern their own business. The Queen's women knew nothing of the arrangement of the rooms, except of those to which their own duties were confined. And what duties! Madame Brunier, one of Madame Royale's ladies, "never enters the Queen's rooms except to take the princess there, whom she leaves there, returning instantly herself. She remains continually in her room."[1] The duty of Madame Neuville, one of the attendants of M. le Dauphin, consists in presenting herself "during alternate months, at the prescribed hours, to help the young prince to rise and go to bed, to dress him and feed him"[2]; Madame de Beauvert, woman-of-the-bedchamber, knows nothing of the palace but her own garret and the large room to which she repairs every evening "to see if she is not wanted"[3]; another, Mlle. Strel, is no busier; her occupation is to "place the *table de nuit* near the Queen's bed at about nine o'clock in the evening, while the princesses are at supper."[4] All of them, lazy and submissive, look on without emotion, even without curiosity it would seem, at the death-throes of royalty.

As much to escape being watched as to take refuge from this haunting superfluity of service, the royal family led the most retired and homely of lives at the Tuileries. The Queen breakfasted alone every day, then sent for her children, and at this hour the King came to pay her a visit. She attended Mass, then retired to her private rooms, and at one o'clock

[1] Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives.* See the Examination of Antoinette Chapuy, wife of Pierre Edouard Brunier, physician to the children of France, first woman-of-the-bedchamber to Madame, the King's daughter, fifty-seven years of age, native of Trévoux.

[2] Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives.* Examination of Marie Madeleine Lechevin de Billy, wife of the Sieur Pierre Edme Neuville, a porter of Monsieur's, thirty-six years of age, a native of Canada.

[3] Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives.* Statement of Claire Claude Andrillon de Beauvert, thirty-nine years of age, woman-of-the-bedchamber to the Queen, p. 44.

[4] Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives.* Statement of Elizabeth Strel, aged twenty-one years and a half, engaged in place of her mother to attend on the Queen, p. 46. In the *Mémoires de Bachaumont*, Dec. 13, 1780, there is a reference to the appointment of Madame de la Borde, sister of the former director of the Opera, as *dame du lit.* Her office was to open and close her Majesty's curtains and to sleep at the foot of her bed whenever she thought it advisable.

dined with the King, Madame Royale, and Madame Elizabeth. After dinner Marie Antoinette generally played a game of billiards with the King, worked at her cross-stitch, and returned to her own sitting-room until half-past eight, at which hour Monsieur, the King's brother, and Madame la Comtesse de Provence arrived for supper. At eleven o'clock everyone retired.[1]

On the 20th June, the day fixed for the flight, this programme was not altered. To no one in the palace, unless it were Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children, had the scheme been confided: and in order to give no handle to suspicion the Queen herself, when the heat had somewhat waned, took the Dauphin and Madame Royale to the Jardin Boutin, where the children ate their supper.[2] On returning at about seven o'clock she gave the order for the next day's programme to the Commandant of the National Guard; then after spending a few moments with a hair-dresser she retired to her own rooms as usual. It was eight o'clock in the evening.

At this same hour three former members of the Bodyguard who had lived in Paris since the disbandment of the company, found themselves once again in the Carrousel. These were MM. de Valory,[3] de Malden,[4] and de Moustier.[5] In accord-

[1] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel*, i, 38.

[2] "On this Monday, the 20th, the Queen attended Mass at about half past twelve, then she returned to her rooms, whence she went into the dining-room for dinner." Madame Gougenot, a woman-of-the-bedchamber, states that at four o'clock she went "into the large room close to the salon, where she thinks the Queen was with her children. She saw her go out with the children at about half past five, and get into the carriage to go for a drive, whence she returned at seven o'clock."—*National Archives.* D XXIXb, 38.

[3] Body Guard, 2nd French Company, Company of Beauvau. *François Florent de Valory*, born at Phalsbourg. Admitted the 24th Jan., 1773, introduced by M. Dauger, adjutant of the company. Address: Blenod, near Toul, in Lorraine. Archives of the War Office, Roll of the King's Body-Guard.

[4] Company of Beauvau. Jean François de Malden, admitted 25th Aug., 1777, at the age of twenty. Native of L'Étang, diocese of Limoges, introduced by his brother, King's guard in the same company.

[5] Company of Beauvau. François Melchior de Moustier de Bermont, native of Grammont, diocese and *generalité* of Besançon. (The *generalité* was a financial district presided over by an Intendant. There were sixteen of them.—*Translator's Note.*) Admitted March 24th, 1773; introduced by M. Gibert, guard in the same company. Address: Beaume-les-Dames, Franche Comté.

ance with an order that they had secretly received to disguise themselves, the three were dressed alike in couriers' jackets bought the day before in the Rue Saint Honoré, near the Oratory, from Longprix, the dealer in old clothes who, at the time of the suppression of liveries, had been the highest bidder for the entire outfit of the house of Condé.

While these three gentlemen were walking up and down in front of the guard-room a person who was unknown to them came, at about half-past eight, to inform Moustier that *they were waiting*. Having been received a few days earlier at the Tuileries, Moustier knew the ins and outs of the building, and while his comrades walked off with the stranger he went into the palace, entered the dark passage on the ground-floor, and climbed the little staircase leading to the King's room. Louis XVI. was waiting for him on the landing of the *entresol*. He took his hand, and drew him quickly into the Queen's library, where Moustier was not a little surprised to find, besides Marie Antoinette, M. de Valory, and M. de Malden, whose guide had brought them in by another way.[1] The name of this mysterious personage, who played one of the most active parts on this evening, has never been revealed: he was evidently a confidant who was trustworthy enough to be initiated into all the plans, and yet not so distinguished that his comings and goings would rouse suspicion. Perhaps he should be identified with the valet Durey, to whom, a month earlier, Louis XVI had confided the secret of the iron safe.[2]

[1] "On the 21st, between eight and nine oclock in the evening, MM. de Malden and de Valory entered the Tuileries by the Galerie du Louvre, which extends along the quay, while M. de Moustier entered by the little staircase that leads to the room of the King's chief valet. His Majesty, who was awaiting him at the first door lest the sentry should raise some objection to his entering, opened the door to him himself at the first sound he made; then, taking him by the hand, ordered him to follow him to the Queen's rooms, where, together with his two comrades" . . . etc. —*Relation du voyage de S. M. Louis XVI, par M. le Comte de Moustier*, 1815.

[2] In the course of the Examination to which Marie Antoinette was subjected before the Revolutionary Tribunal on the 21st Vendémiare year II, Hermann put this question to her:

Whether, among the persons who furthered her flight (June 20, 1791) Lafayette, Bailly, and the architect Renard, were not included.

A. That the two first were the last people they would have

The three guards were presented to the Queen. Moustier was forty years old; he was a very tall man, with a pale grave face framed in a fringe of beard, and with sunken and very short-sighted eyes. Malden, also exceptionally tall, had a face that was "full and long." Valory, who was younger than his comrades, was thin, and appeared delicate.[1]

The interview was very short: nothing was confided to the three guards except that a journey was about to be undertaken, and that M. de Fersen would tell them the rest. The Queen asked for their Christian names, by which to call them on the journey. Moustier was to be *Melchior*, Valory *François*, and as Malden's name was the same, they called him *Saint Jean*, to avoid confusion.[2] Then they quickly separated. While the King was hiding Malden in a kind of cupboard,[3] in which he was noiselessly to await the hour of departure, Moustier, without further precautions, went out past the rooms of the suite and down the grand staircase, carrying in two travelling bags the necessaries for the night of the Queen and the Dauphin, and joined Valory on the Quai near the Pont Royal, where Fersen, leaning his elbows on the parapet and staring at the river, had been awaiting them for half an hour.[4]

As for the Queen, as soon as the interview was over she returned by her private staircase to her rooms on the ground-floor, and calling her attendants, was undressed by Madame

employed; the third was at that time under their orders, but they never employed him in that particular matter.

Q. Put before her that this answer is inconsistent with the statements made by persons who fled with her, from which it appears that Lafayette's carriage, at the moment that the fugitives came down through the rooms of a woman in the service of the accused, was in one of the courts, and that Lafayette and Bailly looked on, while Renard superintended the exit from the palace.

A. That she does not know what statements the persons who were with her may have made; all that she knows is that she met Lafayette's carriage in the Place du Carrousel, but that it went on its way, and she certainly had no intention of stopping. As for Renard, she can declare with certainty that he did not superintend the exit from the palace; she alone opened the door and saw that everyone went out. Campardon.—*Le Tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris.*

[1] Deposition of Joseph Longprix, dealer in old clothes, and of Nicolas Chevreau, tailor's assistant.—Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, pp. 22, 23.

[2] See Fournel. *L'Événement de Varennes*, p. 119, note.

[3] Examination of Malden.—Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 95.

[4] Moustier's Narrative.

Gougenot and Madame Thibault, two of her women-of-the bedchamber.[1]

At nine o'clock as usual, Monsieur, the King's brother, Madame la Comtesse de Provence, and Madame Elizabeth arrived for supper. They met in the Queen's own drawing-room, on the ground-floor of the palace. This was their time for intimate talk: the children did not appear at the evening meal: for as the Dauphin went to bed at the supper hour and Madame Royale a little later, they were served with their meals in their own rooms.

The Queen was a little late that evening. When she appeared Monsieur went forward to embrace her. She was much moved.

"Take care not to upset me," she said, "I do not wish anyone to see I have been crying."[2]

They passed on into a salon which was used as a dining-room, and was next to the large study. The supper was short: at half-past nine the five left the table and returned to the drawing-room, the doors of which were closed after them.

Hardly were they alone together before they began to speak "of the great enterprise."[3] One can picture these five people, once so enormously powerful, but reduced now to this pitiable venture, speaking low, listening through the doors to the footsteps of the valets, arranging their flight, discussing the disguises in which they should muffle themselves, and symbolising so perfectly at that moment the monarchy at bay. Monsieur had decided to start after midnight,[4] disguised as an

[1] Marie Madeleine Xavière Collignon, wife of the Sieur Gougenot (receiver-general of general excise), woman-of-the-bedchamber to the Queen, had gone on duty for the week on Monday the 20th at midday. She was summoned to undress the Queen a little before the supper hour; it was then about nine o'clock in the evening.—*National Archives.* D. XXIXb 38.

[2] "I went down to the Queen's rooms, and had to wait for her for some time, because she was shut up with the three body-guards . . . At last she appeared; I hastened to embrace her: 'Take care not to upset me,' she said to me, 'I do not wish anyone to see that I have been crying.' We had supper, and we all five remained together until nearly eleven o'clock."—*Relation du voyage de S. M. Louis XVI à Bruxelles et à Coblenz en* 1791.

[3] *Idem.*

[4] "The King, who until then had not told me where he was going announced to me that he was going to Montmédy, and strictly commanded me to repair to Longwy, by way of the Austrian Netherlands."—Monsieur's Narrative.

Englishman, with his friend, d'Avaray, by the Soissons and d'Avesnes road, leaving his wife to the care of M. de Gourbillon, who with her was to take the road to Brussels by way of Valenciennes and Orchies. The King, in his turn, told his plans, and they agreed to meet two days later at the Abbé de Courville's château of Thonnelles near Montmédy, which M. de Bouillé had had prepared to give some kind of shelter to the fugitives.[1]

The King and his brother placidly calculated their chances of success. It was nearly ten o'clock ; the moment had come. The Queen, opening the doors cautiously, left the room silently. Looking to see if anyone were following her she gained the libary staircase and reached the first story ; then, holding her breath, for a sentry was keeping guard in the passage, she glided to the door of her daughter's room.

The young princess had only been in bed for a few minutes. Hearing the sound of gentle knocking on the wainscot she became uneasy, and spoke of it to Madame Brunier, who was watching near at hand : the latter hesitated and took fright, but the Queen softly called to her and Madame Brunier opened the door.[2] The Queen entered—quickly, she said—Madame must be dressed and come down with her to the *entresols*: they are going on a journey. This is really stupefying. They are just starting, moreover. The Queen in a few words explains to Madame Brunier "how they are going to settle matters" ; she is to go, too ; she will travel with Madame Neuville,[3] and while Madame hastily rises from her bed the Queen passes on into the next room, which is the Dauphin's.

[1] Thonnelles is a village on the departmental road from Montmédy to Sedan. The Château, which has been recently restored, is of modest proportions and surrounded by a little park. There is still some fairly fine woodwork left in it.

[2] *Relation du voyage de Varennes*, by Marie Thérèse Charlotte of France (her Royal Highness the Duchesse d'Angoulême).

[3] Madame Brunier had not yet gone into her room, "which is next to Madame's, when Madame said to her that someone was knocking at the door. Madame Brunier had some difficulty in opening the door, and it was after hearing the Queen's voice that she did so : the Queen came in, and ordered her to take Madame out of bed and dress her instantly . . . telling her that she was to go away with Madame Neuville." Examination of Madame Brunier, July 5, 1791. Bimbinet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 74.

The governess, Madame de Tourzel, is there with Madame Neuville, and also Madame de Bar, the night-nurse, the only one who sleeps in the room beside the child.[1] He has been asleep for nearly an hour. The Queen draws the green damask curtains, bends over the bed, and to make his waking easy, as mothers will, she whispers a few words under her breath :— "We are off: we are going to the wars, where there will be ever so many soldiers." The prince opens his eyes and stares in surprise. "Will he command his regiment?" And in a moment he is out of bed, demanding his boots and sword. "Quick, quick, let us hurry, let us be off."[2]

While he was being dressed the Queen informed Madame Neuville that she was to follow the prince; hearing which Madame de Bar began to sob and threw herself on her knees, praying for the success of the expedition and kissing the hands of the Queen,[3] who escaped and returned to the salon.

Her absence had only lasted a few minutes, but nevertheless it must have been noticed. The King doubtless asked her about it, and she herself must have explained it in a word: "The children have been roused." Of her absence, of her very evident emotion, Monsieur, in writing his account of this evening, *does not say a single word!* His indifference with regard to his nephew, whose name he does not once mention, is one of the peculiarities of his astonishing narrative. Was the Queen afraid to let her brother-in-law know that the Dauphin was escaping, and did she invent some excuse for leaving the salon? But why this mistrust, and what is the explanation of it?

Madame de Tourzel and Madame Neuville had quickly brought the young prince down to the Queen's *entresol.* The door was shut, and these ladies, on whom the necessity for silence had been impressed, did not dare to knock. The child was overcome with sleep, and Madame Neuville, seating herself on the floor, took him in her arms. Finally Madame Royale

[1] Here Madame de Tourzel's Memoirs differ slightly from Madame Neuville's statement. According to the latter it was Madame de Tourzel who awakened the Dauphin.

[2] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

[3] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

also came down with Madame Brunier, and upon the door being opened they ventured into the Queen's private rooms.[1] There they found M. de Malden, who had come out of his cupboard, and Madame Thibault, whom the Queen had taken into her confidence. This lady had prepared for Madame a dress of brown cloth dotted with yellow and white sprigs, and for the Dauphin a little girl's dress, in which his sister thought he looked "charming."[2] He was so sleepy "that he did not know what was taking place." Madame, who understood as little as he, asked him "what he thought was going to happen." He answered resignedly: "We must be going to act a comedy, since we are dressed up."[3]

The Queen went upstairs several times while they were being dressed; they spoke little in their haste; the King also came to see his children, and gave Madame de Tourzel a note signed with his own hand "to prove, in case of accident, that it was by his orders that she was taking away *the son of France*."[4]

It was half-past ten[5] when they were ready. The King joined his brother, who had stayed with the Comtesse de Provence and Madame Elizabeth in the Queen's drawing-room. The Queen, pushing Madame de Tourzel before her, guided her towards a door that was generally fastened, of which she had the key. This door gave access to one of the

[1] Examination of Madame Neuville.

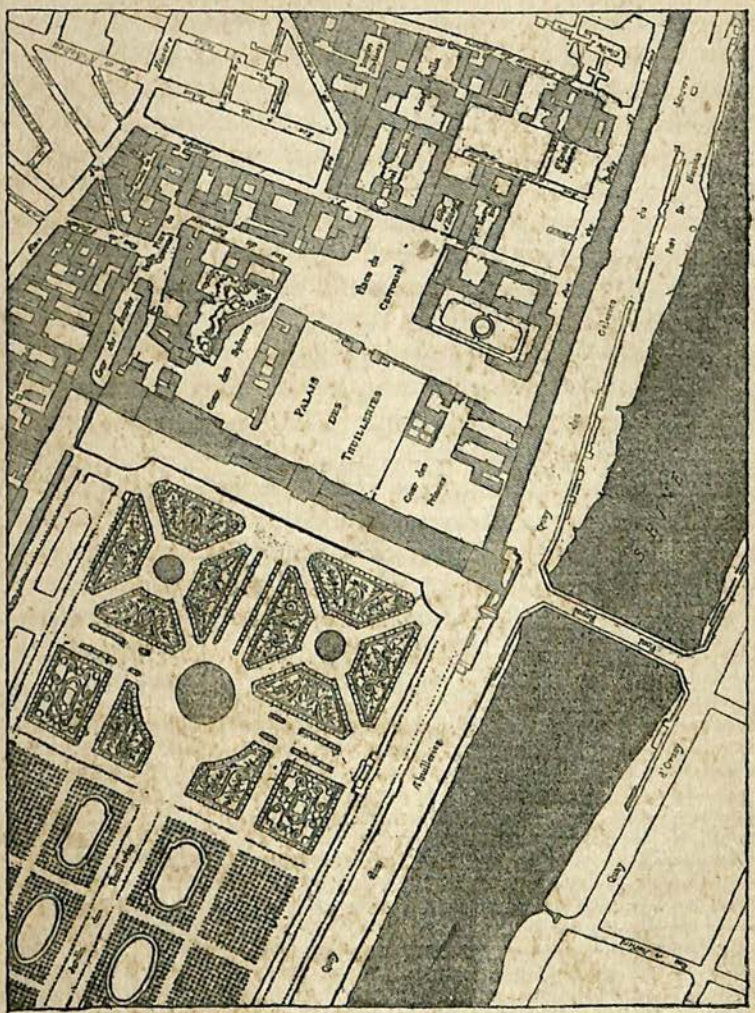
[2] "I had long ago taken the precaution of having a little cloth dress and cap made for my daughter Pauline, in which to dress Monseigneur le Dauphin as a little girl if circumstances made this change necessary. We made use of them successfully." *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

[3] Narrative of Marie Thérèse Charlotte.

[4] "The King added that I should only learn the details of the journey after we had started, in order that it might be less embarrassing to answer questions if I should be unfortunate enough to be stopped; after which he gave me a note signed by himself, to show, in case of accidents, that it was by his orders that I was taking away Monseigneur le Dauphin and Madame. He also gave me permission to take M. de Gouvion with me if we met him, supposing he undertook to further the departure of their Majesties. I had also marked two pieces of gold, with a view to giving one of them to a National Guard if we should happen to meet one, promising him at the same time to make his fortune, and to give him a good sum of money when he should produce a coin similar to the one I should keep myself to compare with his."—*Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel*, i, 305.

[5] "At half past ten, when we were all ready, my mother herself led us to the carriage in the middle of the courtyard." Narrative of Marie Thérèse Charlotte.

suites of apartments that opened on the court, and had usually no communication with the rest of the palace. The rooms into which they groped their way had been occupied by M. de



PLAN OF THE APPROACHES TO THE PALACE OF THE TUILERIES IN 1791.

Villequier, who had emigrated; they were empty, and echoed to every sound; Madame de Tourzel, who was full of anxiety,[1]

[1] "On leaving the Queen's sitting-room Madame de Tourzel entered a passage that was quite strange to her and led her to the door of M. de

pressed the silent children to her side. They paused at the end of an empty room; through a huge glazed door they saw the glimmering lights of the Carrousel and the groups of people moving in the court. The Queen looked out for a moment, and then hid herself once more in the gloom. Under the cold insensibility affected by the legal documents one can guess at the anguish that must have wrung the heart of Marie Thérèse's daughter at this fatal hour. Three times she went to the door and looked keenly round the court;[1] then a shadow appeared outside and peered closely through the panes. The door opened; the man who entered wore an overcoat and a coachman's hat: it was Fersen. Without uttering a word he took the Dauphin's hand; Madame de Tourzel drew Madame's arm through her own, and they passed out, down four steps and across the pavement of the Princes' Court, "as bright as in full daylight." But the carriages drawn up along the walls of the palace made a line of shadow which enabled them to gain the Royal Court.[2] The National Guards were walking about there, enjoying the fresh air, talking in high voices and laughing loudly. Madame Royale, being nearly pushed over by one of them, could not restrain a cry of fear, and turning round at the same moment, perceived that her mother was behind her. They found the

Villequier's rooms, which looked out over the Cour des Princes; there was a man there whose name she did not know, nor his rank nor where he lived, who gave his hand to M. le Dauphin while she herself gave her hand to Madame, the King's daughter: it was thus that all four of them went from the Queen's sitting-room to a door that opened on the Cour des Princes. She observes that having been much agitated at the time, she cannot be perfectly certain of the accuracy of the answer she is about to give.

"How was the person dressed who gave his hand to M. le Dauphin and probably walked in advance of her (Madame de Tourzel)?

"Said that owing to her being much agitated and indisposed she was not able to observe the kind of clothes, especially as the corridor was not lit up. She does not even know whether it was a man or a woman who acted as guide."—Examination of Madame de Tourzel. Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 86.

[1] *Relation du départ de Louis XVI, par le duc de Choiseul.*

[2] "It is very easy to get out of M. de Villequier's rooms, because of the number of carriages that hide the entrance in the Cour des Princes; the carriages being there to wait for the people who are attending the King's *coucher* or coming away from Madame de Tourzel's rooms."—Statement of J. B. Cauthanet-Cléry, valet to M. le Dauphin. Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 20.

carriage, "a venerable coach that looked like a cab," which Fersen, being obliged to follow the line, had not been able to bring nearer to the palace, and which stood in the rank in the middle of the Royal Court. In spite of the imminent danger of being recognised,[1] the Queen walked to the carriage under the light of the street-lamps, among those groups of soldiers who saw her daily. The door was opened and the Dauphin took his place; then Madame, and finally Madame de Tourzel; and Fersen, having mounted the box, whipped up his horses. The Queen then returned to the palace alone, traversed the deserted rooms, closed the doors, and regained the salon, where she found the King, Monsieur, and her two sisters-in-law. It was a quarter to eleven.

. . . . .

Madame Neuville and Madame Brunier, who had remained in the Queen's *entresol* with Malden, waited there meekly for their orders. They knew nothing except that they were going away. "You are to go to Claye," the Queen had said. But how? And where were they to go next? In the surprise and agitation of the moment they had not dared, nor had they been able, to ask questions. Madame Brunier, who was no longer young—she was fifty-seven years old—did not even show the least wish to embrace her husband and children, who were living in the palace, "two steps away from her."[2] She had not made any preparations, moreover, not even to the extent of a single package; indeed, she had not

[1] "Everyone knows that the King left Paris under a false name; in fact, the circumstances of *his* departure are known. What is not so well known is that all the royal family were seen as they went out by Gouvion, Chief of the Staff of the National Guard, who never left the Tuileries, his quarters being near the gate of the Cour des Princes. The fact was so apparent to Madame Royale that she said, clinging to her virtuous Aunt Elizabeth; "Alas, *ma tante*, we are lost, Gouvion has seen us!" This rascal, a traitor to the last, wishing his unhappy master to have all the shame of an abortive scheme and the humiliation of a scandalous arrest, pretended at the time to notice nothing."—*Mémoires du Marquis de Maleissye*, p. 213.

Is it necessary to point out that Gouvion cannot have recognised *all the royal family*, who did not leave the palace together, and that Madame Royale cannot have clung to her aunt, since her aunt was not there, having only escaped from the palace an hour later?

[2] "She was told that she was going to Claye, there to await further orders: she was not even allowed time to see her husband and children, who were only a few steps away."—Examination of Madame Brunier.

changed her dress, but was wearing the same gown of thick blue taffeta that she had put on in the morning. Whether it came from obedience or bewilderment, this state of passivity was peculiar.

The Queen reappeared for an instant. She was excited. "Come, come, be quick, be off!" she said to the two women.[1] They went out, guided by the unknown man who had brought the two guards to the palace. He led them upstairs to the first story and along the passage, then down again to the ground-floor,[2] and out of the building by the door of the Queen's staircase in the corner of the Princes' Court, at the foot of the Pavillon de Flore. The ladies followed, without uttering a word; their companion, equally dumb, led them to the quay, crossed the Pont Royal, and turned to the right on the Quai d'Orsay.[3] Near the Guignard Baths[4] a carriage was standing; it was a stage-cabriolet with two lamps, painted yellow and drawn by three horses.

The postillion, a youth of twenty, named Pierre Lebas, was walking to and fro. He had been waiting for an hour, by order of "three individuals whom he had brought from the Rue Matignon," who had disappeared into the Rue du Bac on the pretext of having a drink.[5]

[1] Examination of Madame Neuville.

[2] "Said that at about eleven o'clock she left the *entresol*, to which she had come down with Madame Brunier and a man who showed them the way: that they went up again from the *entresol* to the great corridor, then descended by a little staircase at the end of the corridor, and went out of the palace by the door opening into the Cour des Princes, passing in front of Madame de Tourzel's rooms."—Examination of Madame Neuville.

[3] The Quai d'Orsay was at that time merely a high bank, which was reached, on turning off the Pont Royal, by an extremely steep incline.

[4] Formerly the Le Poitevin Baths.

[5] Pierre Lebas, postillion, deposes:—"He heard someone tell the ostler that a messenger from M. de Fersen had come in the afternoon to order three horses from the *postillonage*. That someone came at seven o'clock in the evening to say that the horses would be wanted at nine o'clock, and that they were to be taken to M. de Fersen's house; that he himself in his capacity of postillion led the three horses to the house of the said Fersen at about nine o'clock in the evening or a quarter past, and that he found in the courtyard an individual who told him to wait; that soon afterwards two other individuals arrived, who conversed with the one who was already in the yard and said that the gentleman had not yet arrived; that at about ten in the evening, or a quarter past, a gentleman arrived whom he presumed to be M. de Fersen, who told him to harness the three horses to a post-chaise that was standing ready in the yard; that the gentleman he presumed to be M. de Fersen then disappeared, after telling him to drive

The unknown opened the door of the cabriolet, helped the ladies to enter, closed the door, bowed, and slowly walked away, while the postillion leapt into the saddle. The horses were already mounting the slope of the Pont Royal when it occurred to Pierre Lebas "that he did not know where they were going." He stopped, and turning round, asked the ladies whither he was to drive them. Through the lowered window they answered: "To Clayc," and Lebas proceeded on his way, not without having observed "that the unknown individual, seeing that the carriage was stopping, had hastily approached it." [1]

Meanwhile, at the palace, the evening was drawing to a close in the usual monotonous way, as far as outward observances were concerned. As the hour approached when the royal family were in the habit of separating, the attendants of the *coucher* went to their posts. In the Queen's large dressing-room, besides Monsieur's attendants and those of the Comtesse de Provence and Madame Elizabeth, there were waiting the women-of-the-bedchamber, Madame Thibault—the only person now in the secret—and Madame Gougenot, and Desclaux the page-of-the-bedchamber. A little before eleven o'clock the doors of the salon were opened; the King had gone to his own room. Monsieur was the first to leave the palace; his carriage was waiting for him under the colonnade at the foot of the Queen's staircase; he entered it with the Duc de Lévis, who escorted him every evening.[2]

the carriage to the Quay and stop opposite the Le Poitevin Baths; that the deponent having observed that he did not know the Poitevin Baths the gentleman he presumed to be M. de Fersen said to him—'Don't you know the Pont Royal?' That the deponent answered 'yes,' and that at once one of the three individuals added: 'I will show him the way'; that on arriving at the said Quay, at the spot mentioned, the three individuals said to the deponent: 'Turn the carriage . . . '; that they told him again to wait, as they were going to have a drink; that accordingly the deponent saw them going into the Rue du Bac. . . "—Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 10.

[1] Deposition of Pierre Lebas.

[2] "It was not eleven o'clock when I left the Tuileries, and I was very glad, because I hoped that the Duc de Lévis, who usually escorted me home every evening, would not have arrived: I wished this for two reasons; first, because I did not care to be asked questions which, however irrelevant they were, might be embarrassing: secondly, because I was in the habit of chatting with him for a fairly long time before going to bed, and I feared that by going to bed at once, as was necessary, I might arouse his suspicions. I was mistaken in my expectation; he even called my attention to his punctuality, from which I would gladly have exempted him."—Monsieur's Narrative.

The Comtesse de Provence, leaving in her turn, was accompanied by Madame de Gourbillon, while Madame Elizabeth went to her rooms in the Pavillon de Flore by way of the landing on the Queen's staircase, and was attended by a captain of the National Guard, who left her only at her own door. He heard the bolts drawn within, and saw that across the threshold a mattress was placed on which a chasseur of the Guard stretched himself for the night.

The women-of-the-bedchamber entered the Queen's room as soon as she was alone, to arrange her hair for the night and to undress her.[1] While they were thus occupied the page Desclaux bolted the doors of the corridor and the inner shutters of the windows; another page, Duperrier, "turned down the bedclothes." The Queen issued her commands for the next day, ordering some carriages for a drive. None of the attendants who waited on her had any suspicion of her anxiety, which must, however, have been intense, seeing that she was for the first time separated from her son, who at that late hour was wandering in a cab at the mercy of chance,—wandering in that terrible city of Paris, whose wrath she had heard, during the last two years, muttering round the walls of her palace.

At half past eleven the toilet for the night was completed. Madame Gougenot helped the Queen into bed, ordered Desclaux to put out the lights, and retired. She generally slept, with her waiting-woman and Madame Thibault, in the large dressing-room, where Duperrier set up three camp bedsteads; but this evening Madame Thibault conveyed to Madame Gougenot an order from the queen "to spend the night in the little room that was assigned to her at the top of the palace." Madame Gougenot obeyed, leaving Madame Thibault alone within reach of the Queen.[2]

In the King's room matters were proceeding in an equally normal way. The *coucher* took place in the State Chamber, according to the usual forms. On the railing of the bed was placed a cushion of cloth of gold, on which lay the night-cap

[1] Statement of Madame Gougenot.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 38.

[2] Statements of Madame Gougenot, of Jean Antoine Duperrier, thirty-eight years of age, page of the Queen's Repository, and of Louis Jean Marie Desclaux, forty years of age, page of the Queen's bedchamber.

THE BARRIER OF ST. MARTIN IN 1791.

ENTRANCE TO THE COURT OF THE TUILERIES IN 1791.

and pocket-handkerchiefs; the white silk slippers were standing near; on an arm-chair was the dressing-gown, also white.

The King came into the room at eleven o'clock, handed his hat and sword to the first gentleman-in-waiting, and entered into conversation with those who stood round—a conversation "more or less long according to the pleasure he took in it." Then he passed inside the railing that surrounded the bed, repeated a prayer, removed his coat and nether garments, and coming out again, sat down in an arm-chair: whereupon a page-of-the-bedchamber on the right, and on the left a page-of-the-wardrobe, fell upon their knees, each taking in his hands one of the King's feet, in order to remove the shoes and stockings. This was the signal to retire. The usher said: *Pass out, Gentlemen*, and the private attendants were left alone with His Majesty.[1]

On this particular evening Lafayette arrived to attend the *coucher* at about a quarter past eleven. The King was determined not to cut short the usual conversation: they spoke of the procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi, which was to take place on the following Thursday, and of the altar that was being set up in the court of the Louvre: but Louis XVI seemed preoccupied, and went to the window several times to observe the weather. The sky was cloudy: the night was very dark.

At half past eleven the ceremony came to an end at last, and the King, freed from his visitors, left his State Chamber for the next room—the one that he actually used. Marquant, the page, and the valet Lemoine, being left alone with him, helped him into his bed. Marquant drew the china-silk curtains—patterned with flames—that enclosed the King's alcove, and left the room; Lemoine, who was to sleep in the room, fastened all the inner bolts and retired to an adjoining dressing-room to undress.[2] This was the moment for which the King was waiting. Pushing aside the curtains, which closed again behind him, he noiselessly left his bed and slipped through a little dressing-closet into the Dauphin's deserted

[1] *Souvenir d'un page de la Cour de Louis XVI, par le Comte d'Hézecques.*
[2] Deposition of Marquant.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 26.

room, whence he reached the Queen's *entresol*. There he found ready for his use a very simple costume, a round hat, and a grey peruke. While he was thus dressing himself on the lower story Lemoine silently returned to the royal chamber in his night-shirt, conscientiously fastened to his arm a cord, whose other end he hooked, as usual, to the curtain behind which he believed the King to be asleep, and laid down with his customary care lest he should awake his master.[1]

. . . . . .

In the meantime the old hackney-coach in which Fersen, disguised as a coachman, was carrying off "the children of France," had passed without misadventure through the carters'-gate of the Royal Court. Fersen drove it to the quay,[2] and, turning to the right, passed along the deserted Quai des Tuileries at a very quiet pace, crossed the Place Louis XV, and then, being certain that he had not been followed, returned by the Rue Saint Honoré as far as the Rue de l'Échelle, where he drew up before the door of a private hotel called the Hôtel du Gaillarbois. It was there that the King, the Queen, and Madame Elizabeth, if they succeeded in leaving the palace, were to look for him. The time must have been about a quarter past eleven, for Lafayette, coming from the Hôtel de Noailles in the Rue Saint Honoré on his way to the *coucher*, passed at this moment, escorted by his torch-bearers, in the Rue de l'Échelle. Madame Royale recognised the carriage, and Madame de Tourzel, in a panic, hid the Dauphin among her petticoats. The poor child said afterwards "that he had believed, when he was hidden in this way, that he was being saved from some people who wanted to kill him."

The Hôtel du Gaillarbois stood almost at the corner of a narrow Square called the Petit Carrousel, a space somewhat elongated in shape, surrounded by high houses. Here, in addition to the Hôtel de Brionne and the Hôtel de la Vallière, which adjoined the courts of the Tuileries, was the old gateway of

[1] *Relation du départ de Louis XVI.* By the Duc de Choiseul.

[2] "In order to give the King time to arrive we went for a drive on the quays, and came back by the Rue St. Honoré, to await the royal family opposite the house called at that time the Hotel Gaillarbois."—*Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

the King's stables, on whose pediment a group of horses was carved in the blackened and broken stone.[1] This spot was constantly crowded with cabs in rank, with coachmen, porters, and ostlers; it was the region of harness-makers and saddlers. The shop of the saddler Ronsin was here.[2] The neighbourhood of the royal stables attracted quite a special class of clients to the taverns of the Petit Carrousel.

Fersen, growing uneasy at the prolonged delay, had left his seat and "was walking round and round the carriage like a man who is examining his horses." He was so well disguised that a cab-driver, taking him for one of his own profession, entered into conversation with him. Fersen had the presence of mind to keep it up "in the slang of the livery stables," and rid himself of his interlocutor by offering him a pinch of snuff from a shabby snuff-box with which he had had the forethought to supply himself.[3]

And now the carriages were filing out of the palace courts; the *coucher* was over. The passers-by were becoming fewer. Fersen was in agonies: what should he do if the King and Queen did not succeed in leaving the Tuileries? How, in that case, would it be possible at dead of night to restore the Prince Royal and his sister to the palace? While he was meditating thus, standing at his horses' heads—the carriage had been waiting there for three-quarters of an hour—he became aware of a woman sitting on a stone bench at the door of the Hôtel de la Vallière, and thought he recognised Madame Elizabeth. He drew near and found that it was indeed the Princess, who had been brought to the spot by one of her equerries, M. de Saint Pardoux. She was dressed in a dark gown, and wore a wide grey hat trimmed with gauze that fell round it like a veil. Fersen went up to her, "walking as though he were merely sauntering past," and said in a low voice: "They are waiting for you." Either because she did not hear, or because she feared to make a mistake, the Princess remained on the bench. Fersen repeated the words as he again passed by, whereupon

[1] Thierry. *Guide du Voyageur*, 1787.
[2] *Relation du départ de Louis XVI.* By the Duc de Choiseul.
[3] Narrative of Fontanges. Madame de Tourzel notes an almost similar fact.

Madame Elizabeth rose and went to take her place in the carriage.[1] She at once allayed the anxiety of the governess and Madame Royale: no one in the palace had any suspicion of their flight; the King and Queen were following her. They soon appeared: first the King, accompanied by M. de Malden, who wore a great-coat over his livery. Fersen opened the door, and the King settled down with much satisfaction. He had crossed the courts, cane in hand, without being noticed by the soldiers who were walking about, and had even, on its becoming unfastened, calmly rebuckled his shoe. His costume, however, was a very slight disguise: over his brown coat he had drawn a riding-coat of bottle-green, for the night was chilly.[2] Soon afterwards the Queen arrived, last of all: they made room for her, joyfully; Fersen mounted the box and Malden climbed up behind the carriage. Then they drove off, greatly pressed for room. At the first turning there was an exchange of caresses, while the Queen recounted the incidents of her escape. The gentleman who accompanied her[3] did not know the way to the Petit Carrousel, and was obliged to ask it of the mounted sentinel of the Guard, on duty at the gate of the Royal Court. Then she also had met Lafayette. After the King's *coucher*, the general had spent a long time in inspecting the Guard, and as his carriage turned towards the quay it passed so close to the Queen that she was able to strike the wheels with her switch. She wore a dress of grey silk, a short black cloak, and a black hat with a wide falling veil.[4]

Meanwhile the carriage was rolling through the streets. The night was dark, but in spite of this the King perceived that they were in the Rue Sainte Anne. This was not the way to the Barrier of Saint Martin, and he became uneasy.

[1] Choiseul's Narrative.

[2] Statement of M. de Malden. Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 96.

[3] Fersen says: "M. de . . . ." (Klinckowström, ii. 7). The name was never given. Was this the *unknown* who had already in the course of that evening introduced the bodyguards into the palace, and accompanied Madame Neuville and Madame Brunier to the Quai d'Orsay? It is not very likely. A man who knew the ins and outs of the palace so well would not have been obliged to ask his way to the Petit Carrousel.

[4] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.* See also Bimbinet, *Pièces Justificatives*, pp. 73-90. "The Queen had a grey hat," says Choiseul, Narrative, p. 50.

FRANÇOIS FLORENT DE VALORY.
From a Miniature in M. Bernard Franck's Collection.

[*See p.* 267.

DROUET.

Instead of turning to the right over the boulevard, as the travellers expected, the carriage passed into the Chaussée d'Antin; and presently it stopped. This was in the Rue de Clichy, not far from the Jardin Boutin, which the Queen had visited during the day. Fersen sprang to the ground, and knocked at the door of a house on the left. It was Crawfurd's house, and Fersen, fearing lest his instructions should have been misunderstood, wished to make sure that the berline, which had been in Crawfurd's coach-house in the afternoon, had left it at the appointed time. The hall-porter told him that the carriage was no longer there, and Fersen, reassured once more mounted the box.

The fugitives, who did not know the object of this digression, bewildered themselves with conjectures, but dared not ask questions of their driver. It was a long way to the Barrier of Saint Martin: Paris seemed to be limitless.[1] It was two o'clock before they came in sight of the high new rotunda of the custom-house building,[2] where they saw lights[3] and heard sounds of laughing and dancing, for there was a wedding at the clerk's house. They drove through the gate. Now they were on the open road, and very desolate it was; for though the moon was shining behind the clouds it was a black night, and the sky was veiled. Fersen stopped the carriage: the berline was not there. . . . This was a new torture; and this time the King insisted on leaving the carriage in spite of all remonstrances to question Fersen, who was growing uneasy.[4] Were their plans going to miscarry after all? They wasted a quarter of an hour in hesitation; then Fersen, going further along the road, discovered the berline with its four horses drawn up beside the ditch, its

[1] A glance at a map of the period is enough to make it plain that unless they left Paris by the Barrier of Clichy, as they certainly did not, the travellers must have gone down again to the Boulevard and have kept to it until they reached the gate of Saint Martin. No other road led transversely from the Rue de Clichy to the Barrier of La Villette.

[2] This is the rotunda that is still standing, and serves at the present day as a store for the custom-house.

[3] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

[4] "There was a stage-coach there in which we were to travel. M. de Fersen did not know whereabouts it was. We had to wait there a long time, and my father even got out of the carriage, which made us very anxious."—Madame Royale's Narrative.

lights out, Moustier on the box, Balthazar in the saddle, both of them having been motionless and silent for the last hour and a half. Valory, on the fifth horse, had gone on to Bondy to see about the relay of horses.[1]

The carriages were quickly placed door to door: the royal family were installed in the spacious berline, which was closely shut; Fersen, leaving the cab and the two horses at the edge of the ditch, took his place on the box between Moustier and Malden, and the carriage dashed off along the road at the full speed of its four horses. It was about half past two. Exactly above the crown of the road, which cut the desolate landscape in two with its wide, straight line, the clouds on the horizon were already tinged with light from the first rays of the dawn. Soon Paris would awake, and Fersen, feeling the value of every minute, spurred his postillion on:—"Courage, Balthazar! Quicker—put the pace on! Get on! Come, come, your horses are not in condition; they can rest when they get back to barracks." And Balthazar, worthy man, thinking to himself "that since the horses belonged to M. le Comte he was risking nothing in driving them at his master's pace," tortured them with whip and spur.[2] In less than half an hour the carriage was at Bondy: beyond the sunk-fences of the castle on the left the glades of the park could be seen:

[1] Statement of Balthazar Sapel, M. de Fersen's coachman. "The two individuals (Valory and Moustier) and the deponent arrived at the barrier (bringing the berline, which they had found at Crawford's house) at about half-past twelve at night, or one o'clock in the morning; the deponent wished to enter into conversation with the said individuals, and taking them for servants he said to them: 'Comrades, who can your employers be? They seem very rich!' To this question, which seemed to surprise them, they answered: 'You will be told by and bye, comrade.' The one who was on the saddle-horse asked the deponent which was the road to Bondy, upon which the deponent asked the said individual where he was going, and the said individual answered that they were going in the direction of Frankfort in Germany; the deponent observed that he did not know where Bondy was, but thought the road they were on was the right one. A quarter of an hour later the said individual (Valory) started for Bondy on the saddle-horse. As for the deponent, he had waited at the said barrier for an hour and a half or two hours, with the other individual (Moustier) who was seated on the coachman's box. States that during the hour and a half or two hours that he waited no kind of conversation passed between the said individual and the deponent, and that each of them remained in his own place, one on the coachman's box and the other on the postillion's horse."—Bimbinet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 60.

[2] Statement of Balthazar Sapel.

and then in a moment the carriage came to a standstill before the great posting-house.

Valory, who had arrived an hour earlier, had ordered eight horses, which stood waiting in their harness: six carriage-horses for the berline, and two riding horses for himself and Malden. While the ostlers were unconcernedly leading the animals from the stable in the faint light of the dawn, Fersen drew near the carriage door. His intention was to reach Le Bourget and the highway to Belgium by the cross-country roads, on the horse that had carried Valory; then in two days he would join the travellers at Montmédy. When the postillions were in the saddle, awaiting only the word to start, he drew back from the carriage, raising his hat.

"Goodbye, Madam Korff," he said.[1]

For the Queen was to travel under the name of that Russian Baroness, a friend of Fersen's; and the passport mentioned, in addition to the lady herself, two children, a woman, a valet, and three servants;[2] which accounted for the

[1] *Idem.*

[2] These are the terms in which M. de Simolin, the Russian Ambassador, informed his Government of the incident of the passport: "During the first few days of the present month Madame Korff asked me, through a third person, to obtain two separate passports for her, one for herself and the other for her mother, Madame Stegleman, that they might go to Frankfort. I made the request to M. de Montmorin in a note, and he had them sent to me at once. A few days later a message came from Madame Korff to say that when burning various useless papers she had been so careless as to throw her passport into the fire, and to beg me to obtain a duplicate for her. I asked for it on that same day, and fastened her note to the one I wrote myself to the secretary whose business it was to send out passports, who replaced the passport that was said to be burnt."

M. de Simolin fastened to his report a copy of Madame de Korff's note, which ran thus: "I am grievously distressed. Yesterday, when burning various useless papers, I was so careless as to throw into the fire the passport that you were so kind as to procure for me. I am really ashamed of asking you to repair my heedlessness, and of the inconvenience that I am causing you."

M. de Simolin, having made a kind of apology to M. de Montmorin for involuntarily contributing to the King's flight by providing a duplicate of which an indiscreet use had been made, received from the Vice-Chancellor, the Comte d'Ostermann, a severe reprimand: "I must first observe to you that the Empress would have desired, in the present state of affairs, which certainly demands special attention from every monarch, that you should have determined to wait for instructions from here, rather than enter into any kind of correspondence with the Minister of Foreign Affairs over there, who, after the departure of the King to whom alone you were accredited, was no longer supposed to have any plenary power to treat with you.

presence of Madame Elizabeth and Mesdames Neuville and Brunier, who were found at the posting house at Claye, the next stage, at about half past four in the morning. They had been waiting there since two o'clock, and thought they were stranded without resources. It was now daylight. A fresh team was supplied for the berline, and three horses were harnessed to the cabriolet of the women-of-the-bedchamber, which started after Valory—who was despatched as an outrider—and preceded the berline, by the door of which Malden was riding. Moustier, who was extremely short-sighted,[1] was to remain on the box.

Now that Bondy was passed they began to feel confident of success, and arranged among themselves the parts they were to play. It was agreed that Madame de Tourzel should be the mistress, and the Queen should be the governess, with the name of Madame Rochet: the King was the steward Durand, Madame Elizabeth the companion Rosalie, the Dauphin and Madame Royale two little girls, Amélie and Aglaé. It was all, however, the merest game: when the critical moment came not one of them thought of playing the right part. But

Moreover, her Majesty disapproves of the kind of defence that you thought fit to make to M. de Montmorin on the subject of the passport for which you asked him, in which you described the use that was made of it when it was given to the King, as *indiscreet*. So little does this epithet apply to the case in point, that if you had actually procured a similar passport with the deliberate intention of serving the Most Christian King, and of thus contributing to his safety, such a step would have been in every respect pleasing to her Imperial Majesty.

"At the same time her Imperial Majesty enjoins upon you, Monsieur, to conform your conduct to that of those foreign ambassadors and ministers in Paris who are showing themselves most attached to the King, not even refusing to make common cause with them in anything that they think it advisable to undertake in the support of his Most Christian Majesty.

"If, however, disorder and anarchy were to continue in France, the Empress would permit you to leave France on some suitable pretext, and to retire, temporarily, to some German State."

Simolin answered this homily in a very humble letter, regretting "the epithet of which her Imperial Majesty disapproved, for which I beg her pardon. I dare to hope that if your Excellency will be good enough to bring to her notice the circumstances in which I was placed, she will deign to excuse and pardon the step I took. I count too much upon her justice and generosity of soul not to feel confident of absolute success."—Imperial Archives of Moscow.

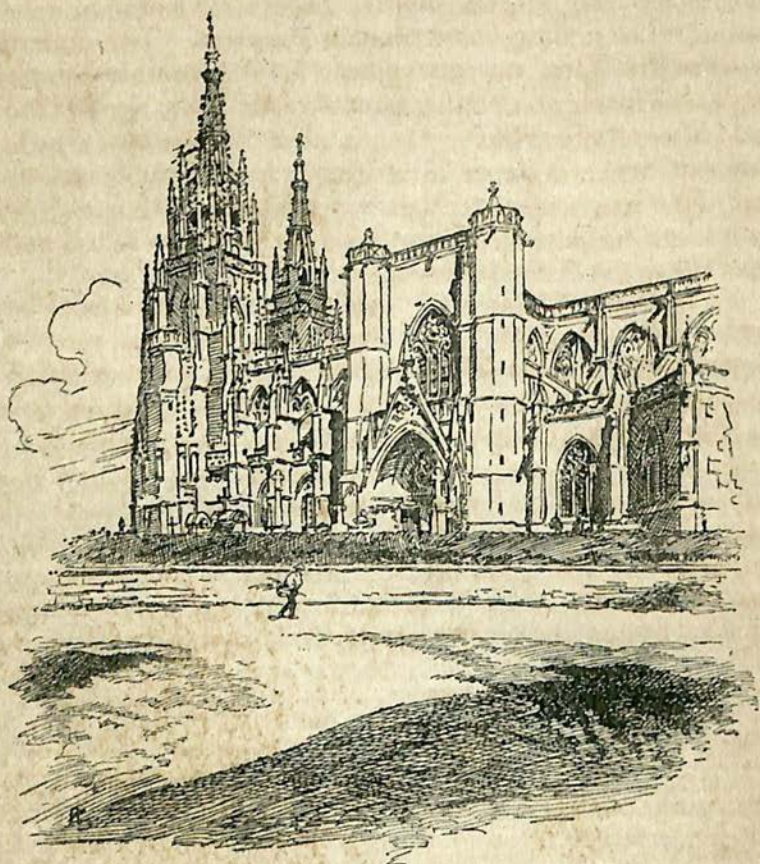
[1] De Moustier had "such extraordinarily short" sight that he professes in his answers in the Examination of July 7 not to have seen "how many horses there were to the berline."—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 108.

for the last two years these poor people had lived in such a state of oppression and servitude that they seemed to have thought at the dawning of this day of June, that their burden was laid down and their freedom assured. One comes across one or two passages in the various accounts that give the impression of a party starting on a holiday, so nearly joyous were they, so full of illusions. The King declared briskly that "once he got his leg over a horse he would be another man.[1]" Then they spoke of the journey. Their way lay through but one important town, Châlons: if this were passed without misadventure their safety was assured, for four leagues further on, at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, they would meet M. de Choiseul with his hussars, and at Sainte-Ménehould and Clermont, the two following stages, M. de Damas would be waiting with his dragoons. At Clermont they would leave the highway to take the cross-road to Stenay, by Varennes and Dun, little country-towns without any post-service—sure to be fast asleep—where M. de Bouillé had ordered fresh horses to be ready, and had quartered detachments of cavalry.

A little after six o' clock they reached Meaux. The posting-house was in the Square of Saint Étienne, nearly opposite to the Bishop's Palace. Here nothing occurred: the eleven horses were ready in a few moments and they continued their journey without delay. Having passed Meaux they "attacked the provisions." The princesses had removed their veils; they ate "without plates or forks, on pieces of bread, after the manner of sportsmen or economical travellers."[2] The Queen called Malden and "offered him food and drink," at the same time telling him of an observation made by the King: "M. de Lafayette, at this moment, does not know what to do with himself." The road, with its four rows of trees,[3] was magnificent, the heat was tolerable, the berline was easy and well padded. It was a wide, high carriage, simple enough in appearance, with the body painted dark yellow and the wheels and frame lemon-colour, the inside

[1] *Madame de Tourzel's Mémoires.*
[2] Moustier's Narrative.
[3] *Itinéraire complet du royaume de France.*

upholstered in white Utrecht velvet, and the blinds made of bottle-green taffeta. The lockers contained, besides the



NOTRE-DAME-DE-L'ÉPINE.

provisions, a dressing-case of silver, and various necessaries for the toilet.[1]

[1] A minutely detailed description of this famous carriage will be found in the second edition of the *Fuite de Louis XVI*, by Bimbenet.—*Pièces Justificatives*, p. 144 *et seq.*

Dazzling descriptions have been given of this berline, and Mercier says somewhere "that it was an epitome of the Palace of Versailles, lacking nothing but the chapel and the orchestra. There is, moreover, a generally accepted tradition that the unwonted splendour of the carriage

At about eight o'clock the fugitives passed through La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. There they left the Dormans road, which was too hilly, for that of Montmirail, which was shorter by two leagues and a half and had but one ascent. The posting-houses were at Bussières, Vieux-Maison —where the King was recognised by a postillion named François Picard, who said nothing of it until the next day[1]— and Montmirail, which was reached at eleven o'clock. Fromentières[2] was passed three leagues further on at midday and three leagues beyond that was the town of Étoges. At each stopping-place the King thrust his hand into a bag and gave the wages of the postillions to Valory.

Up to this point the road had been traversed at the very modest pace of under three leagues an hour, and safety seemed certain. The travellers, however, had been somewhat disturbed by a horseman who persistently followed the carriage;[3] but he disappeared and they thought no more about him. The King interested himself in the route, and did not put down his Itinerary for a moment. At one of the posting-houses he left the carriage,[4] sauntered into a stable, and came out of it again without having said a word to anyone; at another he again alighted, and was instantly surrounded by the beggars who hung about the precincts of the

contributed much towards the arrest of the travellers. This is a mistake: the berline was comfortable but simple. Madame de Tourzel, in a manuscript note (M. G. Cain's collection) says:—"There was nothing extraordinary about the King's carriage; it was a large berline, similar to my own: it had only been built with greater care, and was fitted up inside with a greater number of conveniences."

In the diaries of Comparot de Longsols, published in extracts in *L'Annuaire de l'Aube* (1898) by the Abbé Etienne Georges, we find this note:—"Wed. 28th Jan., 1795. We hear that during the night of the 5th–6th of Pluviose the Dijon diligence took fire: it is suspected that some coals in the foot-warmer of a lady-passenger were the cause of it; it is the same carriage that was used by the last King for his flight, and in it he was stopped at Varennes."—(Communicated by M. Berthelin.)

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIX, 37.

[2] "The posting-house (of Fromentières) is still there, at the end of the village. You will easily recognise it. It is the last house on the left. Above the door swings the sign-board, on which time has left legible the words: *A la poste.* Beneath it, fixed upon the wall, is another sign-board, but a more recent one, the badge of the T.C.F. (*Touring Club de France*). A drinking-trough, fixed to the wall, completes the picture."—*La Route de Louis XVI à un siècle de distance*, by A. Schelcher.

[3] Madame Royale's Narrative. [4] Moustier's Narrative.

posting-houses with the object of rousing the pity of travellers. When Moustier attempted to "hide the King," the latter said to him: "I do not think that is necessary any longer; my journey seems to me now to be safe from all accidents."[1] This incident must have taken place at Fromentières, for Valory recounts that at one of the posting-houses, at about *eleven o'clock or midday*, he saw the King standing for a long time outside the carriage, "chatting with a number of people who stood round him, and talking to the passers-by about the crops."[2] As for Madame de Tourzel, she suggested giving the children some fresh air by walking with them, "while the postillions were mounting a long hill at a foot's pace"—doubtless the hill in the woods of Moras, at a distance of one league from La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. The King determined to walk with them, and Malden helped him to alight and to get into the berline again.

Chaintrix, where they stopped at half-past two in the heat of the day, was a hamlet "of about fifteen hearths."[3] The road, which had been lately built on a strong embankment across the marshy lands in the neighbourhood of the Somme-Soude, "was bordered by three houses only"; a tavern, Nicolas Petit's forge, quite close to the bridge that crossed the river, and the posting-house, the first building passed on the left in coming from Paris.[4] This was called "the posting-house of Le Petit Chaintry."

The postmaster, Jean Baptiste de Lagny, was a man of about fifty years of age. He had filled the office since 1785, the date of the construction of the new road, having formerly been a labourer and the owner of a farm and tavern[5] at Bierges, through which place the old high road to Paris lay.

[1] Moustier's Narrative.

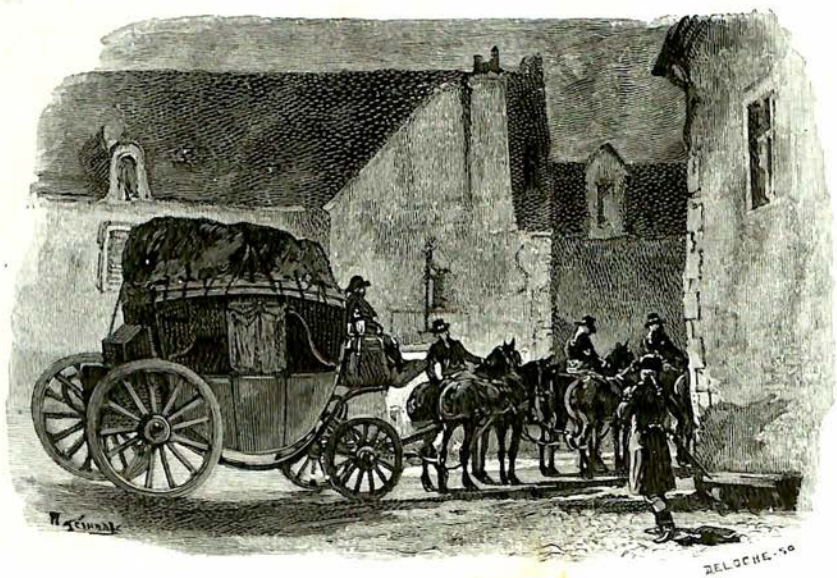
[2] Examination of the Sieur Valory.—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 115.

[3] Communicated by M. Oct. Maurice, road-surveyor at Chaintrix, corresponding member of the Academical Society of the Marne.

[4] *Idem.* The buildings of the old posting-house are still standing. Since 1791 houses have sprung up on each side of the road; it is now the most interesting and most important group in the village.—(Communicated by M. Maurice.).

[5] One of his uncles, Claude de Lagny, a hotel-keeper at Bierges in 1697, had had his "canting arms" registered — : *Az: on a lake arg: a sheaf ert, surmounted by a bird's nest sa* :

POSTING-HOUSE AT PONT-DE-SOMME-VESLE.



THE ROYAL BERLINE.

De Lagny had been a widower[1] since 1788, and was living in 1791 with his three daughters. The eldest, Marie Rose, had passed her twenty-first year, the third was a little girl of thirteen; while the second, Marie Anne, had lately married in February, Gabriel Vallet, the son of the landlord at the *Croix d'Or*, at Vitry-le-François. Gabriel, although he was a minor at the time of his marriage, was a shrewd youth. He had gone during the preceding year from Vitry to Paris, to celebrate the Federation; he happened to be with his father-in-law, de Lagny, at the posting-house of Le Petit Chaintrix, on the day that the royal berline passed by, and no sooner had he observed the travellers than he recognised them. Great was the excitement! De Lagny hurried out with his three daughters, and the King and Queen, thinking that concealment was unnecessary so far from Paris, accepted their homage all the more willingly that the Dauphin and his sister were worn out with fatigue and heat, and were in need of attention. The travellers refreshed themselves at their leisure. De Lagny and his daughters showed them the greatest respect, zeal, and devotion; and when the King wished to acknowledge their services, de Lagny implored to be allowed to decline all remuneration, which so much touched the Queen that she took from her *nécessaire* two silver bowls, which Madame de Tourzel gave in her name to the postmaster.[2] While Madame Vallet was bestirring herself with her two

[1] His wife's name was Marie Anne Tartier.

[2] These two bowls are still preserved by the existing descendants of Jean de Lagny; one is at Vitry-le-François; it has the King's monogram on the bottom: two L's interlaced; the handles are covered with delicate ornamentation. The other bowl, which is in Paris, is simpler, but of the same shape.

This solid evidence, together with the perfectly clear tradition that has been handed down in the family, leaves no room for doubt as to the fugitives having stopped at Chaintrix, or of the fact that they were recognised by all the inhabitants of the posting-house; but a question then arises for which we have no answer. Of the eleven persons who travelled in the berline and the cabriolet, eight have described, either in detailed narratives or in answer to minute examinations, every little incident of the journey: *not one* makes any allusion to the stop at Chaintrix or to the eagerness and zeal of the de Lagny family. Madame Royale, who had a personal interest in remembering the circumstances, simply observes:—"At Étoges we thought we were recognised: at four o'clock we passed the large town of Châlons-sur-Marne: there we were perfectly well recognised. Many of the people thanked God when they saw the King." But of Chaintrix not a word.

sisters, her husband was attending to the changing of the horses. He would not trust any mere postillion with the responsibility of conducting these august patrons, but himself mounted to the saddle, and when the children were somewhat rested and refreshed the berline moved away amid an exchange of salutations, good wishes, and thanks. It is very improbable that the news of such an amazing incident should not have spread to a certain extent among the ostlers who were present at the change of horses. It is at all events certain that from the moment they left Chaintrix the identity of the travellers was known; they were driven by a young man in possession of the terrible secret, who, being more zealous than prudent, kept up a pace so reckless that in the course of the five leagues of perfectly straight road between Chaintrix and Châlons the horses fell down twice.[1]

At last, at a little after four o'clock, they entered Châlons by the suburb of Marne. The two carriages and their outriders passed through the Rue de Marne, the Place de Ville, and the Rue Saint Jacques. Twenty-one years earlier Marie Antoinette had crossed Châlons on her way from Austria, and it is impossible that the contrast between the two journeys should not have struck her forcibly. Here, in this market-square, the girls of Châlons had on that other occasion greeted her with complimentary verses:

Princesse, dont l'esprit, les grâces, les appas,
Viennent embellir nos climats.[2]

And now the fugitives have reached the Rue Saint Jacques. Here is the posting-house, and round it a fair number of inquisitive bystanders: this is the dreaded moment. From the way in which the people stare it is impossible to doubt that they recognise the royal family. Did Gabriel Vallet say a word in the ear of Viet the postmaster? One cannot tell:

[1] "By way of a crowning disaster the horses of the King's carriage fell down twice between Nintré (this is Chaintrix, the word has been misread on the MS.) and Châlons; all the traces broke, and we lost more than an hour in repairing this disaster."—*Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

"The carriage ran into a bridge before reaching Châlons, which caused some traces to break, but they were mended in less than half an hour."—Deslon's Narrative (*Mémoires de Bouillé*).

[2] *La Dauphine Marie Antoinette en Champagne*, 1770, by E. de Barthélemy.

but it is quite certain that Viet was not deceived for a moment by the disguise of the fugitives, while the inquisitive crowd that had collected round the posting-house were equally well informed as to the rank of the travellers. "We were perfectly well recognised," observes Madame Royale: "many of the people thanked God on seeing the King, and prayed that he might escape."

An incident occurred here that is still rather obscure. An *individual belonging to the town* recognised the King, and intimated the fact to Viet the postmaster, who "would not take anything upon himself." The man, persisting in his object, hurried to the Mayor, M. Chorez, who in his consternation hesitated and temporised so successfully that the other returned to the posting-house determined, or pretending to be determined, to keep his belief to himself.[1] Viet hastened the business of changing horses, while the bystanders dispersed; and thus it was not yet half past four when the carriages started away, passed the gate of Saint Jacques, and left the town behind them, turning to the right on the fine road to Metz.

And what took place after their departure? Did not the *individual belonging to the town* regret his indecision? Half an hour later, when the berline had drawn up for a moment on the straight road and the travellers were congratulating themselves on having passed Châlons without any mishap, a man *dressed like a bourgeois* "came up to the carriage door and said in a fairly loud voice: *Your schemes are badly*

[1] Whatever Victor Fournel may say (*L'Événement de Varennes*, p. 128), the fact of this recognition cannot be doubted. In addition to the observation quoted from Madame Royale, we have, to support her testimony, the account published in the *Mémoires de Wéber*, which was written by Mgr. de Fontanges, and purports to have been directly inspired by the Queen's recollections. Finally, the Queen herself related the incident to the Comte de Fersen, when she saw him secretly at the Tuileries, on the 14th Feb. 1792, and gave him the details of the journey. He says in his journal:—"At Châlons they were recognised; a man warned the Mayor, who took the line of saying that if he were sure of the fact he had only to publish it, but that he would be responsible for the consequences." It will be asked how Marie Antoinette, in the depths of the berline, could be so accurately informed; but it must be remembered that on the return journey, during the twelve hours that the royal family spent at Châlons, the Queen conversed with the Mayor of the town, and it was from himself that she heard of the incident.

laid, you will be stopped, and made off before anyone had time to find out his name or what he was."[1]

From this time forward the news of the fugitives' approach preceded them. At least half an hour before they reached the posting-house at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, where fifty of Choiseul's soldiers were awaiting them, the post-master of the place confided to the dragoon Aubriot that *the king was going to pass,* an indiscretion which caused so much excitement that Choiseul was obliged to recall his soldiers.[2] At Sainte Ménehould a barmaid spread the same rumour. At Clermont an officer approached the King and told him in a low voice "that he was betrayed";[3] everywhere the inhabitants gave signs of being already in an anxious and over-excited state, everywhere they crowded along the route of the berline. Hitherto we have been obliged to regard these various incidents as a truly remarkable series of links in a chain of chances and accidents; but now that it has been proved that the fugitives were undoubtedly recognised at Chaintrix and at Châlons it becomes evident that for the rest of the journey they were "forestalled" by some speedy messenger,—no doubt by the person *dressed like a bourgeois* who, as they left Châlons, uttered the note of warning that has been recorded.

The royal family, however, were now certain of success. Only four leagues further on, in less than two hours, they were to meet M. de Choiseul at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, with the forty hussars of the Lauzun regiment whom M. de Goguelat, Assistant Quartermaster General of the army, was to have taken there that same morning from Sainte Ménehould. Goguelat, whom Bouillé had despached to the King in the early days of June, had studied the route in detail from Châlons to Montmédy, had placed the troops himself, and

[1] *Mémoires de Wéber.* Narrative of Monseigneur de Fontanges.

[2] "The postmaster of Pont-de-Somme-Vesle came to me and told me there was a rumour abroad that the King was about to pass. I hid my feelings as best I could, and answered him that those who spread this report were ill-informed. . . . I was able to report the postmaster's information to M. le Duc (de Choiseul), who was beginning to think that our uneasiness had some foundation. . . . Towards five or six o'clock in the evening he gave the order to retire. . . ."—M. Aubriot's Report, appended to the Narrative of de Choiseul.

[3] Madame Royale's Narrative.

intended, as soon as the berline arrived at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, to hurry on before it at full speed, with the object of warning the different detachments of the approach of his Majesty. All this part of the route had been minutely studied, and it was in the most absolute confidence that the fugitives travelled over the four leagues that lay between Châlons and Pont-de-Somme-Vesle.[1]

They passed Notre Dame de l'Épine, and we may be sure that the hearts of the women sent up a hymn of gratitude towards the fretted spire of that marvellous church. The road, mercilessly straight, stretched out across the chalky plain; a few windmills were dotted about on hillocks. From the carriage windows the princesses looked out, doubtless trying to descry in the distance the sky-blue coats and white facings[2] of M. de Choiseul's hussars. Not one was to be seen! And yet they must surely be near the spot? And then suddenly the berline drew up.

There was no village to be seen. The road was bare, save

[1] "The orders were that, if the King wished first to reveal his identity to his troops, the various detachments should be successively recalled to form a rear-guard quite close to the carriage, while the new detachment formed the advance-guard. If, on the contrary, his Majesty wished to preserve his incognito, the officers in command were to allow the carriage to go on, and thus give it time to change horses, at the same time marching behind it sufficiently closely to provide against any accident. The orders prescribed that the troops were to follow the carriage closely, were not to allow themselves to be passed by any courier on any pretext whatever, and were all to arrive at Montmédy together. It would be difficult, no doubt, to give more precise or more carefully calculated orders, or ones that should better provide against all emergencies."—*Mémoires du Marquis de Malaissy*, pp. 215–217.

Quite true; and Bouillé declared that he had foreseen everything, even *his sudden death.*

But he could not have foreseen that Choiseul and Goguelat would leave their post at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle simply because the peasants told them to. This step, and their retirement by a cross-country road, prevented Goguelat from *preceding the berline by one league*, which would have given time for the troops to arm themselves, and above all for the relay of horses at Varennes to be at the place where it was expected to be, and not at the other extremity of the town. It has sometimes caused surprise that one of the outriders, Valory or Moustier, did not, in default of Goguelat, go on in advance, and precede the berline by an hour; but according to the regulations then in force, postmasters were forbidden "to furnish horses to outriders accompanying a carriage before the arrival of the carriage at the posting-house." Thus an outrider could not precede the travellers he was with by a longer time than a riding-horse can gain on a carriage, and he was obliged to wait at each stage for the arrival of the carriage.

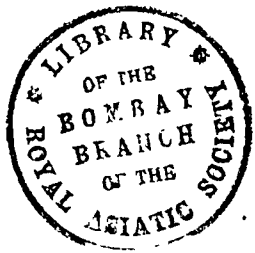
[2] Regulations of 1786, Lauzun Hussars.

or a fine new farm on the left, with a pond.[1] And there was Valory, overcome with dismay. "Where are we?"—"At Pont-de-Somme-Vesle: this farm is the posting-house." "And Choiseul?"—"Gone." "And the hussars?"—"Not a man." "And M. de Goguelat?"—"Not a soul!"

The ostlers, without hurrying themselves, changed the horses unconcernedly. The King stared out over the carriage-door mechanically, feeling "that the whole world was deserting him."[2]

[1] *Le voyageur françois*, 1790.

[2] Narrative of M. Deslon, captain in the regiment of the Lauzun Hussars. —*Mémoires sur l'affaire de Varennes, comprenant le mémoire inédit de M. le Marquis de Bouillé.* A collection of the memoirs relating to the French Revolution. Boudouin, 1832.



CHAPTER III

THE NIGHT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST

It was impossible either to return or to wait: impossible even to make inquiries of the people at the posting-house without giving rise to suspicion. The only course was to proceed, in an agony of uncertainty, along the road where disaster was most probably lying in wait. For indeed there were signs of unusual excitement upon that road. Some mounted police, going towards Châlons, had passed the berline; others had been seen walking in the opposite direction. It was imperative to reach Sainte-Ménehould as soon as possible. The forty dragoons that were to have been stationed there by M. de Damas would doubtless be found at their post.

They started, then, but at the first strain of the collar the four leaders fell. They were dragged to their feet by dint of much flogging, the postillions settled themselves again in the saddle, and a second departure was attempted, only to be followed by a second fall. This time the four animals in their struggles entangled themselves so completely in their harness that it was necessary to unharness them on the ground, in order to release one of the postillions, who was so firmly wedged under his horse that he left his boot behind him when he was pulled away. The berline got off at last, however, and the procession started in the same order as before: Valory as outrider, then the cabriolet, then the royal carriage escorted by Moustier, whose place on the box had been taken by Malden.

The straight white road rose and fell in long undulations,

following the natural slopes of the country, and leaving the village of Auve on the right. Then, on a plateau, the *De la Lune* tavern came in sight. The hussars, whom the fugitives were still hoping to meet, did not appear; there was not even a sign of their having passed by. At Orbéval, an isolated house at the next stage after Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, a fine farm with a chapel built against its wall did duty as a posting-house, but the horses were missing: they were in the fields, and could not be brought back under a quarter of an hour. Valory treated the postillions to a glass of brandy,[1] while the horseless berline and cabriolet stood at the side of the road and the swing-bars lay upon the ground. The sun, which had not been visible the whole day, shone out at about half past six,[2] lighting up the melancholy landscape: the mill of Valmy was turning on its hill; the plain, varied here and there by woods, was still and peaceful. But the aspect of the country changed as soon as Orbéval was left behind; a great pond appeared on the left; and suddenly the dusty plain was succeeded by green fields, while on the eastern horizon rose the dark line of the hills of Argonne.

Valory had started first, and was pushing on with all the speed possible to his hired mount, in his anxiety to reach Sainte-Ménehould. It was half-past seven when he came to the first houses of the suburb of Fleurion. He crossed the bridge, passed into the Rue de la Petite Auche and straight on along the Grande Auche, which is the central street of the town. The townsfolk were at their doors: it was still broad daylight, being about a quarter to eight. As he entered the Place Royale, facing the town-hall, Valory saw a group of dragoons chatting and laughing with some of the townspeople in front of the *Soleil* inn, on the right; others were seated before the *café* at the corner of the Grande Auche. Not wishing to attract attention, he trotted on his way as one who knew the road, and darted into the Rue de la Force, a street that has no thoroughfare. He was obliged to retrace his steps,[3] ask his way, and cross the busy crowded square, where at the door of the town-hall some people were arguing

[1] He did the same at each stage. *Précis historique du Comte de Valory.*
[2] Moustier's Narrative.
[3] Choiseul's Narrative.

Rue de la Basse Route de Clermont
PLACE ROYALE 3
Rue de la Grande Auche
Rue de la Petite Auche
Rue de la Fleuriotte
Route de Châlons
100 Mètres

PLAN OF SAINTE-MÉNEHOULD IN 1791.

1. Town Hall. 2. Posting House. 3. *Soleil d'Or* Inn.

noisily. Valory as he passed roused their attention, for his livery of Condé's colours was well known in the Clermont country. He was seen to dismount in the Rue de la Porte des Bois, before the posting-house, and to speak to M. d'Andoins,[1] the officer in command of the dragoons, whose long lean figure, prominent nose, and Gascon accent had been the talk of the town since the morning.

While the ostlers were preparing the horses d'Andoins told Valory all he knew. Forty of Lauzun's hussars from Toul had left Sainte-Ménehould that very morning for Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, under the command of M. de Goguelat. Why had the berline not met them there? What had become of them? To this d'Andoins could give no answer; but the townspeople of Sainte-Ménehould, seeing the forty hussars replaced by thirty dragoons, had become alarmed: these movements of troops, "without information being given to the municipality, without rations, and without quarters," seemed suspicious. Both men and horses, as a matter of fact, were—at their officers' expense—occupying the *Soleil* inn at the corner of the Rue de la Porte des Bois and the Place Royale, a circumstance that had greatly enraged the post-master Drouet, whose stables were but fifty yards away. During the day he had been over in a fury to see Faillette, the landlord of the *Soleil*, whom he informed shrilly that "that was not the way to behave; that if anyone wished to carry on the post-house in his place, he, Drouet, would set up a pot-house"; and he swore that "he would not let it be forgotten."[2] In a word, the town was disturbed: the "dragoons were not to be trusted," having been lounging about all day in the taprooms with the men of the place, who were trying to satisfy their curiosity by making the soldiers talk and explain the object of their presence. The call to saddle, if it were sounded at this moment, would confirm suspicion and

[1] Baptiste Jean Simon Étienne d'Andoins was born at Pau on September 2, 1745. He enlisted in the Carabiniers on March 1, 1760, and was a captain in the Royal Dragoons in June, 1791. In the following September he was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel in the cavalry. He retired on May 31, 1792, and settled down at Orthez with a retiring pension of 1,287fr. 35c.—Archives of the War Office.

[2] Statement of the Sieur Lagache, sergeant-major in the Royal Dragoons appended to Choiseul's Narrative.

might result in a brawl. The best thing to do was to change horses without mustering the troop, and to go on quickly.

And now the cracking of whips and the cries of postillions announced the arrival of the berline. It appeared from the Grande Auche, and crossed the square diagonally with its six horses trotting briskly: the yellow jackets of Malden on the box and Moustier at the door, with the cabriolet following,

POSTING-HOUSE AT SAINTE-MÉNEHOULD.

made a sensation among the crowd of townsfolk loitering there, expecting something to happen. The carriage, as it passed Faillette's house, was but three paces from the groups of dragoons who stood there: instinctively they all faced about and carried their hands to the visors of their helmets.[1] The lady in the berline responded with that inclination of the head—at once dignified, gracious, and indifferent—peculiar to monarchs on the road. This was observed. The most inquisitive ran towards the posting-house to secure a nearer view of these aristocrats who were emigrating with such a large following; the people called to each other, rushed out of the houses, and jostled one another in their anxiety to arrive in

[1] Statement of the Sieur Lagache, sergeant-major in the Royal Dragoons, appended to Choiseul's Narrative.

time. Captain d'Andoins, planted in the middle of the street with his arms extended, made every effort to control the mob: he was, however, soon borne down, and was heard to say to Moustier, who was hastily helping the ostlers to change the horses, "Get away quickly! You are lost if you do not hurry!" Then, turning to some of his own men who were mingling with the staring crowd, he ordered them to go to supper instantly: to which the emboldened dragoons answered "that there was nothing to hinder them from looking on; they were doing no harm." [1]

The travellers, meanwhile, made no attempt at concealment: with the blinds drawn up and the windows open, they were placidly looking on. D'Andoins approached and spoke to them respectfully, his hand at his helmet. Among the crowd a rumour arose that "it was the Prince de Condé, who had returned to France incognito and that the dragoons were there to protect him as he left the kingdom." The postmaster Drouet, who was returning from the fields, made his observations like everyone else, estimated the weight of the berline, and exhorted the postillions not to kill the horses.[2]

The carriage drove away, but its huge mountain of luggage was still to be seen moving along the Rue de la Porte des Bois when a rumour arose that it contained the royal family. In an instant the report was general: it was cried from one door to another; the whole town heard it at the same moment. Faillette's maid greeted Sergeant Lagache with the words, "It is the King who has just passed by." [3] The amazing news spread in the *cafés*, and the

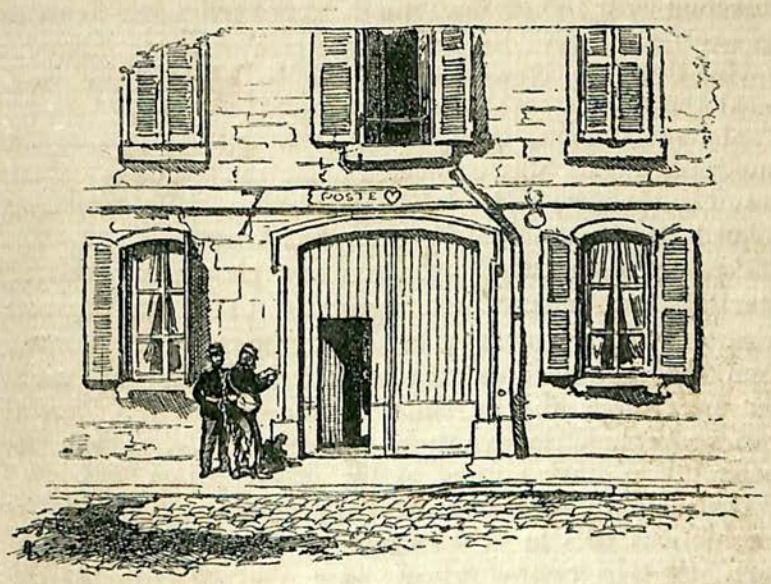
[1] Narratives of Lagache and Bouillé. Official Reports of the Municipality of Sainte-Ménehould, &c.

[2] "Just as they had finished harnessing the horses to the two carriages the postmaster Drouet came in from the fields . . . he had been cultivating a field that day in the district known as *la Malassise*."

La Vérité sur la Fuite . . . de Louis XVI, by E. A. Ancelon, 1866. Dr. Ancelon was a native of Sainte-Ménehould, and his book is valuable in that it records a number of local traditions collected by the author. We may then regard it as certain that Drouet arrived at the very moment when the business of changing horses was finished, and he had no time, nor did it occur to him, to look long at the travellers' faces. This version of the affair, moreover, agrees perfectly with the official documents, such as the Reports at Sainte-Ménehould.

[3] Faillette's girl said to me as she passed: "You were right, Monsieur,

agitation grew. At the corner of the square a trumpeter sounded the call to saddle: d'Andoins urged his men to hurry, but they had turned sulky, grumbling that they had eaten nothing since the morning, and demanding bread and cheese. The officer yielded, foreseeing mutiny, while the inquisitive mob crowded round the soldiers. "Do not let



DOORWAY OF THE POSTING-HOUSE AT SAINTE-MÉNEHOULD.

them go," cried the people; "do not allow them to mount." The dragoons were drawn aside. "Your officers are rascals, they are betraying you." In front of the municipal buildings the town drummer beat the call to arms; the National Guard armed and assembled, and took up their position before the *Soleil d'Or*.[1] D'Andoins sauntered calmly out of the inn, and appeared bare-headed in the street, making a show of eating his bread and cheese in perfect ease of mind. By this time

when you assured me that you were only expecting a treasure, for it is the royal family."—Statement of the dragoon Lagache, appended to Choiseul's Narrative.

[1] For the details of all that took place at Sainte-Ménehould after the departure of the berline, see the Narrative of Sergeant Lagache, and the Official Reports of the municipality (in Ancelon's book on the subject).

the crowd had become very large, filling the square and surrounding the dragoons. Sergeant Lagache sprang into his saddle, and backing his horse scattered the staring mob ruthlessly with a couple of quick movements; then, either from bravado or by way of calling upon his comrades to follow, he urged his horse forward and dashed away in the direction of the Porte des Bois, firing his pistol in the air as he went.

Great was the commotion that followed. "Stop! Stop!" cried the people. "Down with the dragoons! To arms!" Captain d'Andoins, being taken in charge by two of the municipal guard, was conducted amid the hootings of the crowd to the town-hall. Night was falling. The municipal council had assembled in the great crowded hall. The officer, on being called upon to show his orders, declared that he had merely been instructed to secure the safe transport of some money that was expected with a convoy from Châlons. One of the municipal officers—his name was Farcy—ran to the house of the postmaster Drouet, "to make inquiries as to anything remarkable that the latter might have noticed as the coach passed through." Drouet, holding forth to a circle of bystanders, declared that "he noticed no one in the berline but a fat, short-sighted man, with a long aquiline nose and a pimpled face," and he inquired if the King did not answer to this description.[1]

[1] The story of Drouet recognising the King in the berline, by comparing his face with the portrait on an *assignat* received in payment from the King's own hand, is evidently an invention which only sprang up later on in the postmaster's imagination. If we confine ourselves to the text of the official documents (Reports of the Municipality of Sainte-Ménehould), all that we find is "that a coach, not especially remarkable, preceded by a cabriolet in which were two women, seems to have attracted the attention of several individuals, and especially that of the Sieur Drouet, master of the posting-house where these carriages had stopped to change horses." It was a little more than an hour and a half after the berline had passed through that the municipal officers repaired to Drouet's house "to make inquiries as to what he had observed." They found Drouet "preparing to go and inform the municipality *of his suspicions*." Of his suspicions—he did not recognise the King, then; and his eagerness in asking questions as to Louis XVI's personal appearance proves abundantly that he had never seen him before. Moreover, if he had been certain of the King's identity, as he boasted later on, how was it that he did not oppose the departure of the fugitives, instead of waiting till they had secured a considerable start of him, and then risking his life—very bravely, be it said—in pursuing

Farcy, assuring him that the portrait was accurate, ran quickly back to the town hall, where the council unanimously decided at once that "the fugitives must be caught." Meantime the uproar without was increasing, and the delirious town raised shouts of applause on hearing the names of the citizens despatched to pursue the King. These were Drouet the postmaster, and a local official called Guillaume, who was nicknamed *La Hure* because he kept an inn of which the sign was a boar's head.[1] Drouet had served in Condé's dragoons, Guillaume in the Queen's dragoons, and they were both known to be reliable horsemen. On this point, therefore, there was no uneasiness, but were there not many other risks? At this moment it seemed as though the whole town were possessed by one idea—the marvellous enterprise that these two men were about to undertake. Their life was the life of all; their preparations were followed step by step. Thus it was known that Drouet's wife besought her husband not to rush into this alarming adventure. He, however, resolutely saddled the only two horses that were left in his stables, and accompanied by Guillaume dashed off at full speed along the road to Clermont. The night was growing dark; it was nine o'clock.

At this moment there arrived at the town hall a messenger from the municipality of Neuville-au-Pont, announcing that there were hussars moving about the neighbourhood; they had come from Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, where they had been stationary for some hours; since their presence disturbed the country-people, they had retired by cross-roads in order to avoid Sainte-Ménehould; they had been prowling about all the evening, not far from the Champagne road, in the vicinity

them through a forest which he had reason to believe was being traversed in every direction by armed troops?

The truth is that Drouet's attention, like that of all the bystanders, was much more attracted by the dragoons than by the berline, and that he only began to suspect the rank of the travellers at the same time that this suspicion became general in the town. The news suddenly spread throughout Sainte-Ménehould that "it was the King," in the same way that it had been published at every stage since the recognition at Chaintrix.

[1] National Archives, M. 664. Guillaume was also employed in the offices of the Directory of the district.

of Auve and Hans; at Neuville M. de Choiseul, who was in command, had requisitioned a guide, and they had struck into the forest towards Varennes. "We do not know what to think of all this," wrote the Mayor of Neuville. "We have reason to be afraid . . . in the meantime we are going to call out the guard."

So feverish was the excitement of the people that the news of the secret return of the hussars let loose the hurricane.[1] Captain d'Andoins, who by this time was again in his inn, was once more carried off to the town-hall, amid blows and threats, and was forced to disarm his men, whose rifles, pistols, sabres, and accoutrements were flung down pell-mell in the vestibule. D'Andoins and his lieutenant Lacour were thrown into gaol, and while a furious mob was yelling round the prison door and demanding the officers' heads, barricades of carts and furniture were raised at the confines of the town; the tocsin sounded ceaselessly; the windows, at the word of command, were all illuminated[2] with lanterns, candles, and pots of resin; and mingling with the anxious inhabitants—who were resolved not to sleep that night—were the disarmed dragoons, more than half drunk, shouting *Vive la Nation!* and meekly obeying the officers of the National Guard.

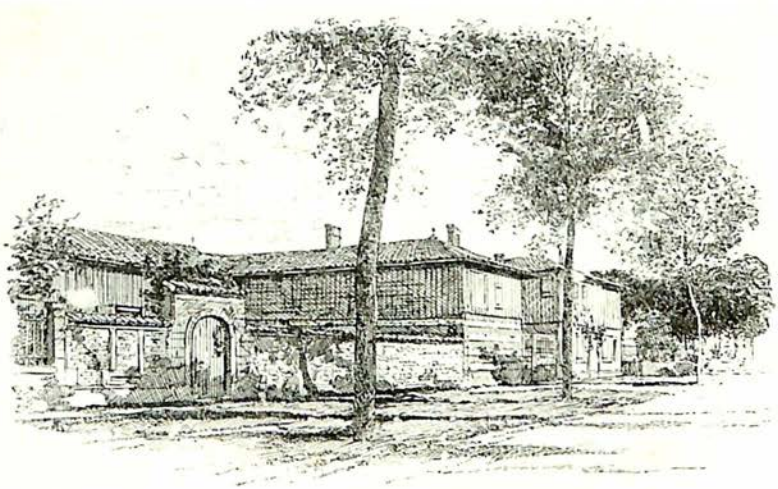
. . . . .

While imminent danger was thus spreading like wildfire behind them, the fugitives were pursuing their way across the silent country. On leaving Sainte-Ménehould the road[3] began to rise between orchards that were quickly succeeded by woods; soon, still rising, it reached the heart of the Forest

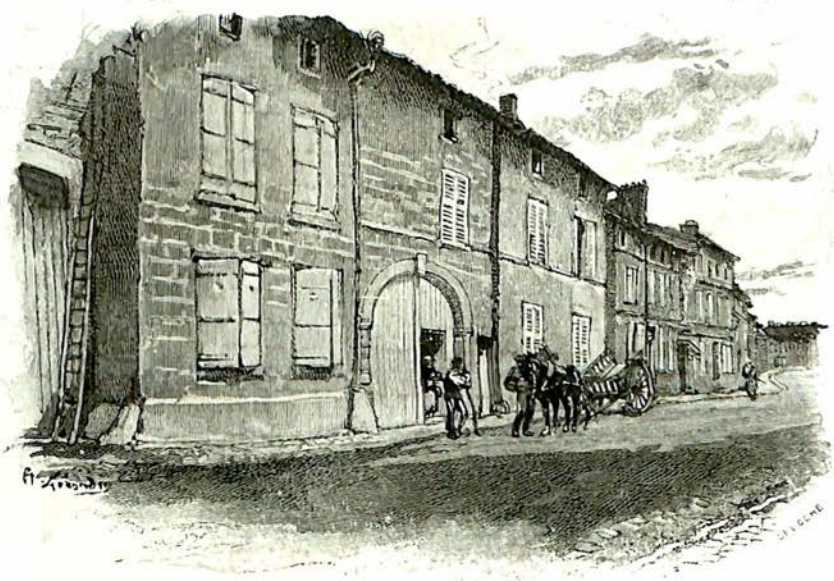
[1] There was a skirmish at the Porte des Bois among the townsfolk, who "took each other for dragoons" in the darkness; the Sieur Collet was killed, and the Sieur Legay seriously wounded.

[2] G. Fisbach. *La Fuite de Louis XVI d'après les archives de Strasbourg.*

[3] "This was not the main road that is in use to-day. The latter, at the junction of three roads just outside the town, leaves the station road to the right and ascends slightly. . . It has been recently built; at the same junction, but quite to the left, the old road turns and goes past the front of the barracks. It is steeper and more deserted, but none the less quite easy and perfectly practicable; and—to say nothing of its historical interest—this sunken road is much more picturesque than the new one, which, moreover, it rejoins half a league further on."—*La Route de Louis XVI.* By André Schelcher.



POSTING-HOUSE AT ORBEVAL.



POSTING-HOUSE AT CLERMONT-EN-ARGONNE.

of Argonne and passed the village of Granges-aux-Bois; slowly it climbed to the summit of the hill of Biesme; there it began to descend, dropping between two hills, while below nothing was visible in the twilight but a gulf of foliage; then it turned, and the valley of Biesme appeared, already dim with the mists of evening. Soon Les Islettes was passed, a large village of flat roofs; then came a long and rapid descent between the sombre ridges of the forest; then one more rise, to be climbed at a foot's pace. Night had fallen when the travellers entered Clermont, a large market town at the edge of the woods, where they expected to find a hundred and forty dragoons commanded by Colonel the Comte de Damas. Valory was still in advance of the others. At the posting-house on the left side of the high road at the entrance of the town [1] he did indeed find Damas, who was lodging hard by in the Hôtel Saint Nicolas, but of dragoons not a single man. The presence of the troops, uninvited, had alarmed the inhabitants, so Damas had been obliged to quarter a part of the detachment at Auzéville, a neighbouring village, and the men who had remained at Clermont were not reliable. Moreover, the hours of waiting since midday had wearied the soldiers and disturbed the people, and he had been absolutely obliged to give the order to unsaddle and to sound the retreat, in order to avoid a collision that might have been disastrous. Valory, on the other hand, did not cast any doubt on the success of the expedition. Nowhere, he said, had the King been recognised; and now the goal was too near and Paris too far for any further mischance to be serious.[2] While he was talking he was at the same time engaging postillions and horses, without noticing that on the farther side of the street a crowd was gathering, surprised to see this courier in yellow livery chatting familiarly with a colonel of so imposing a presence and so great a name.

A second courier appeared, in similar livery, and immediately afterwards the cabriolet, followed by the berline.

[1] "One may still see on the left, a little before coming to a square well, ornamented with wrought iron, at No. 12 in the main street (Rue Gambetta), a gateway upon whose arch the word *Posting-house* can with difficulty be deciphered."—*La Route de Louis XVI.* By André Schelcher.

[2] Narrative of M. le Comte Charles de Damas.

The two great lanterns with their reflectors lit up both the road and the interior of the carriage. In the midst of the stir and bustle of changing horses the lookers on saw M. de Damas, as he stood on the steps of the Hôtel Saint Nicolas, make certain signs to the travellers, who responded with bows and smiles of satisfaction. One of the ladies beckoned to him to approach the carriage door, and the other lady spoke to him, addressing him as *Monsieur le dragon*,[1] which seemed peculiar. And when afterwards the gentleman in the berline began to speak, the same lady "made a sign to him to be careful about his voice."[2] As for Damas, he was wearing his forage cap, which seemed to give him great discomfort, for he was seen several times to raise his hand instinctively to remove it.[3] The business of the relay lasted for ten minutes. When the horses were ready and the three new postillions, Renaud, Baron, and Arnould, were in the act of mounting, the post-master's wife, Madame Canitrot, enjoined upon them "to be back at break of day on the morrow with their horses, to carry the hay, and to be sure not to fail."[4] Then Valory rode off; Moustier mounted the box of the berline, and as the cabriolet passed on in front cried to the postillion that guided it, "The Varennes road!"[5]

For the cross-road by which the carriages were intended to reach Montmédy branches off at Clermont from the Paris and Metz main road. It boasted no post service, but M. de

[1] General the Marquis de Maleissye.—*Mémoirs d'un officier aux Gardes françaises.*

[2] Damas' Narrative.

[3] Choiseul's Narrative.

[4] "Madame Canitrot had added her injunctions to those of her husband, saying to the postillions that it was absolutely necessary for the horses to be back by the morning of the next day, to bring in the hay. . . . The old people of Clermont say that this excellent woman never forgave herself for having given such an order to her postillions; she believed it to have been partly owing to her that Louis XVI was arrested."—Note by the Abbé Gabriel. *Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé.*

[5] "This was a misfortune that had grievous consequences, because the postillions from Sainte-Ménehould, who had brought the carriage to Clermont, heard the order to leave the high road; and when they were returning, and met the postmaster Drouet who was tracking the carriages and had recognised the King, they were able to answer the questions he put to them, and to tell him the carriages had not followed the high road to Verdun, but had taken the road to Varennes. He then decided to take the cross-road, and did not pass through Clermont, where I should have stopped him."—Damas' Narrative.

Choiseul and M. de Bouillé had despatched to Varennes, Dun, and Stenay the necessary relays, composed of horses from their own stables, protected by detachments of hussars. When once Clermont was left behind, then, there was no further need of any assistance other than that of the officers responsible for this last stage of the journey through the peaceful little towns that were to be passed at dead of night. Henceforth no evil chance could befall. The carriages rolled slowly along the level road; the fugitives were now full of confidence; all the world was asleep, for as they passed through the village of Neuville not a light was to be seen. Evidently they were safe.

What tragic memories haunt this stretch of road between Clermont and Varennes! How inevitably one dreams here of these poor people, tracked like wild beasts, broken with fatigue, and yet so confident of safety that they had fallen asleep![1] Behind them at Sainte-Ménehould the alarm bells were ringing, the dragoons were disarmed, the town was in a ferment. At Clermont[2] the populace had been in a state of insurrection ever since their departure; the troops were insubordinate, and in vain had M. de Damas persisted in sounding the call to saddle. There too the tocsin was ringing; and the townspeople, after the scene at the posting house, had communicated their suspicions to the municipal body, who had despatched two patriots, Jean Bertrand and the constable Leniau, in pursuit of the berline.

Nearer at hand, wandering in the depths of the wood, and lost among quagmires in their search for the road to Varennes, were the exhausted hussars who had been reluctantly following Choiseul and Goguelat since they left Pont-de-Somme-Vesle. Following almost the same path, and nearly colliding with them at every junction of the roads, Drouet and Guillaume, reckless as bushrangers, were galloping through the forest. They too were aiming for Varennes, for Drouet, as he dashed along the high road near Clermont, had met his own postillions returning to Sainte-Ménehould

[1] "Everyone in the carriage was asleep."—Madame Royale's Narrative.
[2] The official Report of the Municipality of Clermont was published by the Abbé Gabriel: *Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, et Varennes.*

with their horses; and they, having heard Moustier's order, knew that the berline had taken the cross-road, and imparted the fact to their master, who would otherwise have continued the pursuit on the Verdun road, imagining the travellers to be going to Metz. Thus was Fate gathering up the threads of the drama whose scene was to be laid in that little town of Varennes, a town that was utterly unknown until then, and lay peacefully asleep in the profound silence of the country. Darkness had now completely fallen. At that time the carriages of the royal family were still a good half hour in advance of Drouet, and nearly an hour in advance of Bertrand and Leniau; while Choiseul and his hussars were distant but a half a league, but they marched slowly, wearied by twenty-two leagues of travelling, and unaware that the carriages they had just missed at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle were quite close to them. The various roads they were all following met at the very borders of Varennes.

The time was a quarter to eleven.[1] Valory, who had been in the saddle for four and twenty hours, and was at least a quarter of an hour in advance of the royal carriage, halted at the first house of the town: it was there that the relays prepared by M. de Choiseul were to have been found. Not a sound was audible, not a light was to be seen. Valory retraced his steps, thinking he must have passed the spot where the horses were stationed: he even explored a side-road as far as a little wood where the men and the team of horses might, he thought, be hidden. He called: but received no answer. Then, as the carriages, whose lights he saw in the distance, had stopped at the entrance to the town, he returned to the highway, and found them drawn up by the houses on the left side of the road. The travellers, awakened by the sudden stoppage, had thrust their heads out of the window. "Where are we?" "At Varennes." "And the

[1] The royal carriages, leaving Sainte-Ménehould at 8 o'clock and keeping up their average pace of three leagues an hour, would have arrived at Clermont at about half past nine (the distance from Sainte-Ménehould being four leagues, but the road very uneven). The change of horses at Clermont only took ten minutes.—Narrative of Damas. At half past ten in the evening, then, the royal berline must have been very near Varennes, which was only distant from Clermont by three and a half leagues of level road.

horses?" "Not to be found." Malden dismounted; Moustier sprang from the box. The King opened the door, stepped to the ground, and walked a yard or two. On the right was a garden wall, on the left some low houses—hermetically sealed, apparently—among which he recognised[1] instantly the one that had been described to him as the shelter of the horses. That was the place. He went to it and listened; not a sound was to be heard. He knocked upon the door with his fist; still silence. He knocked again, asking "if it were not here that the horses were to be found." A voice from within answered at last—in the words that are used to every tramp: "Be off; we don't know what you want!"[2]

The disconcerted King returned to the berline. The Queen asked what had happened—not that she was uneasy, for danger seemed so far from this calm night, but she was losing patience. Sixty hussars are quartered at Varennes: where are they? Why does not their commanding officer appear? Why is the relay of horses not ready at the specified place? Moustier went off to explore. On the right of the road, a few steps away from the carriages, there was a large house whose door was ajar and showed a ray of light. Moustier ran up the two steps to the entrance, but as he laid his hand on the door it was shut violently, as though someone had been lying in wait behind it. He pushed it forcibly, and it yielded, whereupon he found himself face to face with a man of about sixty, in dressing-gown and night-cap, who asked him what he wanted.

"To ask you to show me the way out of the town in the direction of Stenay," answered Moustier, who has recorded this dialogue word for word in his Narrative.

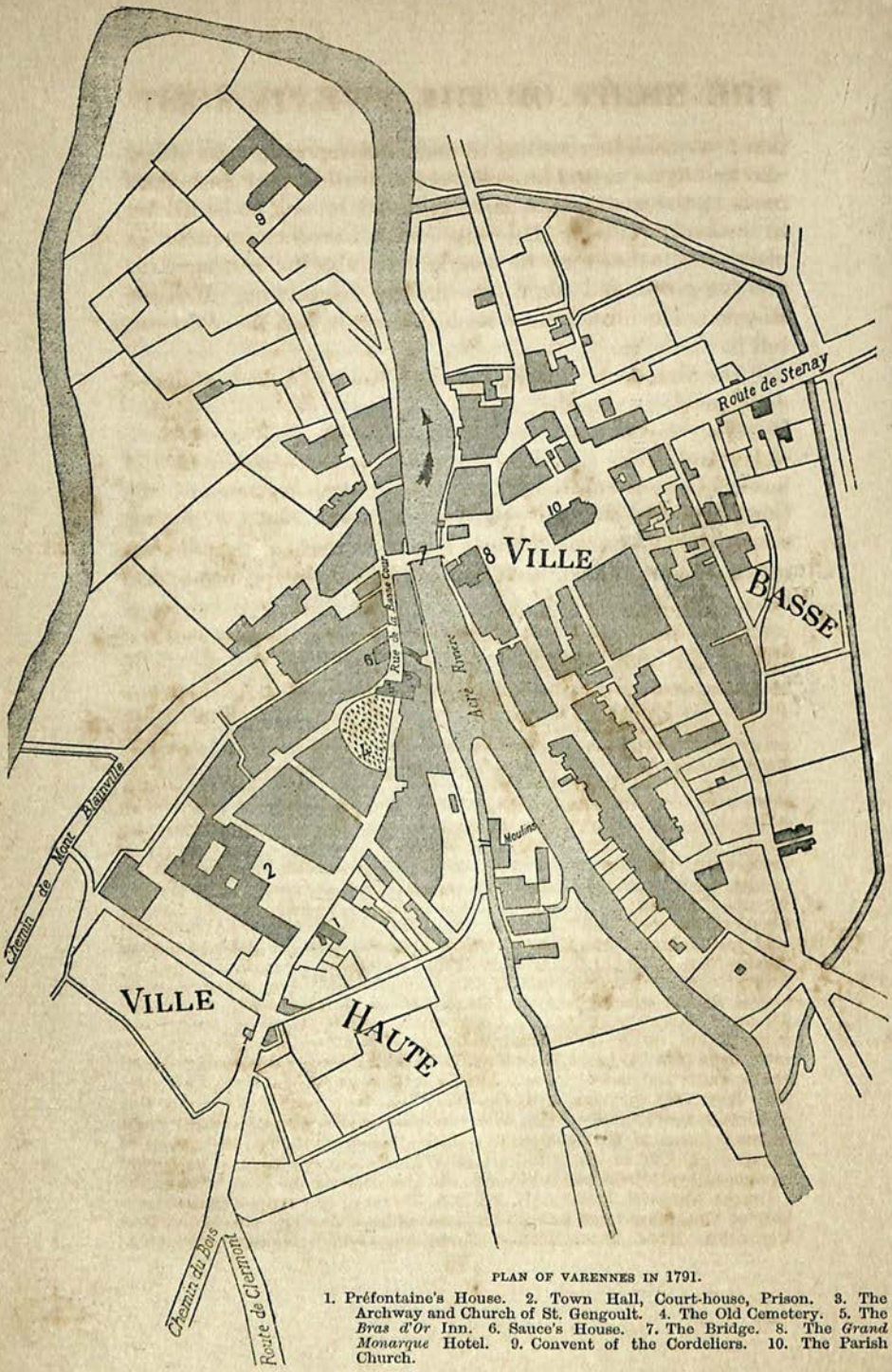
"I would gladly do so," replied the other, "but I should be lost if it came to be known."

"You are too good a fellow not to be anxious to oblige a lady."

"We know quite well who it is," murmured the man in the dressing-gown; "it is not just a lady."

Moustier was dumfounded, and, breaking off the conversa-

[1] Narrative of Fontanges (*Mémoires de Wéber*).
[2] Gabriel. *Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, et Varennes.*



PLAN OF VARENNES IN 1791.

1. Préfontaine's House. 2. Town Hall, Court-house, Prison. 3. The Archway and Church of St. Gengoult. 4. The Old Cemetery. 5. The *Bras d'Or* Inn. 6. Sauce's House. 7. The Bridge. 8. The *Grand Monarque* Hotel. 9. Convent of the Cordeliers. 10. The Parish Church.

tion brusquely, he returned to make his report to the King, who had again seated himself in the berline and wished to speak to the man. The latter allowed himself to be led up to the carriage door. He walked with bare feet in order to make less noise, and he nearly fell into the carriage, his dressing-gown and night-cap greatly frightening Madame Royale. He hinted that he had a secret, but he could not tell it.

"Do you know the Baronne de Korff?" asked Madame de Tourzel.

"No."[1]

He consented to guide Moustier to the quarters of the hussars, who were lodged in the disused convent of the Cordeliers, and the two walked off together along a sloping street. On the way Moustier learnt that his guide was called de Préfontaine,[2] that he had served in the army, and

[1] Moustier's Narrative.

[2] This incident, which is still very obscure, was the cause in 1865 of a lawsuit between the descendants of M. de Préfontaine and Alexandre Dumas, who, in the *Route de Varennes*, had rather carelessly quoted Moustier's assertions, distorting them and attributing them to Valory. (See *Le Droit* of September 17, 1865, *et seq.*) In recording it here we are quoting word for word from Moustier's story, which is minutely exact on every point and of incontrovertible authority. After describing his interview with M. de Préfontaine and his walk to the Cordeliers, he adds: "As it is asserted that he (Préfontaine), with so many others, has since then made many comments on the King's arrest, and has boasted, it is said, that if the King had been willing to listen to him and follow his advice, he would have saved him, M. de Moustier owes it to the cause of truth to declare that the only service M. de Préfontaine rendered, or was willing to render, to his unhappy rulers, was merely to show him, the Comte de Moustier, the way to the quarters of the officer in command of the Lauzun hussars. He would add that never did man appear to him more frightened and pusillanimous than this one; that in the very slight and very useless service that he could by no means avoid rendering to his sovereigns he carried caution to its extremest limits, and never ceased enjoining upon the Comte de Moustier to be 'silent as to the step he was taking . . . . etc.' This gentleman had the grandest opportunity of immortalising himself and making his name illustrious for ever. What overwhelming remorse must have torn his heart if he ever meditated upon his sins, and upon all the outrages and calamities that he brought down upon the best of masters. For, from this moment until the King left that hateful Varennes, this gentleman never came to him with consoling words, never gave any proof by his presence of that concern in the King's welfare that he had sworn to show as a knight of his order, although in that capacity the man should have been ready to shed his blood to the last drop on the King's behalf."

In the *National Archives* (D. XXIXb, 37) there are some letters from a lady of Varennes, dated June, 1791, and addressed to her mother living at Versailles. These letters are not signed, but a single reading is enough to

was a knight of St. Louis. He repeatedly laid stress on the importance of silence with regard to the step he was taking,

show that they were written by the wife of Judge Destez, whose name appears later in the narrative. We note this passage :—

"The journey was premeditated, so much so that he was expected here, and in many other places. . . . A large number of our aristocrats had gone away a week earlier ; no one of importance remained except Préfontaine, whose wife was no longer there. The carriages stopped there when they arrived for a quarter of an hour, but the people there say they did not know who was in them. . . . At five o'clock in the evening (June 22) Préfontaine tried to get away ; he was caught in the wood, and he and his whole household disarmed."

A grand-niece of M. de Préfontaine's, Madame de R——, did me the honour, in 1891, of sending me some manuscript notes, from which I extract the following lines :—

"My worthy great-uncle (M. de Préfontaine) spent two nights and two days on his feet, waiting for that royal treasure for the army which he, with his experience, thought to be a figure of speech to cover the movements of people connected with the Court and the royal family. On this night of the 21st June, 1791, at eleven o'clock in the evening, M. le Chevalier de Préfontaine, being quite worn out, threw himself upon his bed in his clothes, and ordered his faithful valet, Cervisier, to wake him if he heard the slightest sound. The Queen came into his house two hours and a half later, and would not allow M. de Préfontaine to be disturbed, notwithstanding the obvious wishes of Cervisier, who, however, could not have guessed that this lady dressed in black silk, with a sort of hooded mantle drawn over her head, was the *royal treasure* that his master had told him must be very closely guarded. Cervisier, however, was struck by the beauty of this lady, and never spoke of her, even after long years, without saying : 'Ah, she was indeed beautiful. She asked me what time it was ; I looked at my watch ; Half-past twelve, Madame. Then she went away on a gentleman's arm.'"

Not only are the hours mentioned here inaccurate (the stop at the entrance of the village took place at half-past ten at the latest, and the arrest at eleven o'clock), but it must also be pointed out that Moustier very positively affirms that the Queen *did not get out of the carriage and did not go into M. de Préfontaine's house.* No other eye-witness contradicts this. Madame Royale, who records the incident, is quite in agreement with Moustier. However, in the lawsuit of 1865 Maître de Sèze, counsel to the heirs of Préfontaine, supported the opposite hypothesis.

"One evening," he said, "in the night of June 23, 1791 (*sic*), a carriage drew up before his house (Préfontaine's). Several persons got out of it and asked leave to enter. It was the Queen (*sic*) . . . After some moments of repose she rose, expressed her thanks, and retired. This was an unexpected event, and quickly over ; such was the perfectly clear tradition of the family, who were much respected in the neighbourhood. The room that sheltered the Queen for a few minutes was kept exactly as it was at that moment, and became an object of pious remembrance."—*Le Droit*, September 17, 1865.

Jean Baptiste Louis de Bigault de Préfontaine was born on the 18th September, 1734, at Granham, in the diocese of Rheims, and baptised on the 22nd November. He was the son of J. B. Bigault, *seigneur* of Préfontaine and part of Granham, officer in the constabulary of the King's Guard, and Knight of St. Louis, and of Dame Marie Anne de Grathus. He entered the constabulary at the age of ten, was made a supernumerary on the 9th June,

which he declared "would compromise him, would expose him to danger, would be the undoing of him, if anyone came to hear of it." The convent of the Cordeliers was, after all, like every house in the town, wrapped in darkness and silence: the lieutenant of hussars was not there, nor were his men. Moustier discovered no one there but a soldier whom the officer—a German aged twenty-three called Rohrig—had ordered to "come and join him with his portmanteau if he had not appeared at Varennes by one o'clock."

Moustier returned through the town with this news. Valory persisted in searching the neighbouring copse for the missing horses. Then a council was held: the best thing on the whole was to go on into Varennes as far as the *Hôtel du Grand Monarque*, situated at the farther extremity of the town, on the other side of the bridge, in the lower quarter: if the relay were not there the horses might at least be baited before continuing the journey. On this point the postillions remonstrated with energy: the regulations authorised them to refuse to "double the stage"; they did not know the road beyond Varennes; and moreover, their mistress, Madame Canitrot, had particularly impressed on them to be home by the dawn with the horses to carry the hay. However, as they could not stay where they were, they consented, on condition of receiving a good *pourboire*, to go as far as the *Grand Monarque*, where the relay would doubtless be found, one of

1750, a cadet in August of the same year, subaltern on the 29th November, 1755, second lieutenant 1st January, 1759, *garçon-major* in October of the same year, *sous-aide-major* in 1761, captain in 1765, and Knight of St. Louis while junior captain in the Metz Regiment of the Royal Artillery Corps, 15th December, 1772.

He retired on the 1st January, 1777, with a pension of 600 *livres* from the funds of the Artillery and 300 *livres* from the royal treasury, granted to him from July 27, 1769. He lived quietly at Varennes, where he managed the Prince de Condé's estates in the Clermontois. M. de Préfontaine and his wife died as *emigrés* in Brunswick.—Archives of the War Office.

To sum up, it appears certain that Préfontaine was aware of the impending journey of the royal family. We may well suppose that between him and Goguelat, who had gone over the route several times, and had especially stayed at Varennes, there was the feeling of good fellowship that exists among old comrades in arms. No doubt Goguelat confided to Préfontaine the secret of his business there. This theory would explain why Préfontaine spent the night on watch behind his door, and also his words to Moustier, "We know quite well who it is—it is not just a lady."

them, indeed, Arnould, observing that while they were waiting he had heard in the distance the hurried gallop of two horses, "two post-horses; his practised ear could not be deceived."[1] They all took their places again in the berline, and started afresh, Valory leading, then the cabriolet followed by Malden on horseback, and finally the berline, with its six horses at a foot's pace, and the drag on its wheels on account of the hill.

Now Arnould had not been deceived. The sound of galloping that he had heard in the distance was that of the two horses that carried Drouet and Guillaume. Being familiar with all the short cuts, they avoided the high-road, since at Varennes, as at Sainte-Ménehould and Clermont, a detachment of cavalry might be guarding the approaches to the town and thus check their advance. They reached the river by a byway,[2] and while Drouet went on into the upper town to make sure that the carriages had not passed through before him, Guillaume explored the space round the church and the entrance of the *Grand Monarque*.

[1] *Louis XVI à Varennes*, by Ancelon.

[2] Either by the Mont-Blainville road, or by the mill. Most of the narratives support each other in saying that Drouet and Guillaume, as they entered Varennes, passed at full gallop close to the royal carriages as they stood before Préfontaine's house; several even, relying on Valory's narrative, which is altogether imaginary and wrong on nearly every point, add that Drouet, as he drew near to the berline, called out to the postillions that they were to go no further, and revealed to them that they were driving the King. There is not a word of all this in the depositions of the eye-witnesses. Moustier does not say a word, nor Madame Royale, nor Madame de Tourzel; Valory himself, when questioned in the Abbaye prison, July 26th, 1791, by the Commissioners of the Tribunal of the First Ward of Paris, said nothing of Drouet's passing by, though in this examination he was very precise as to the facts and circumstances of the arrest. Of all who were present, then, not one saw the passing of the two horsemen, and certainly it was not an incident likely to be forgotten. It is true that Drouet says in his account before the Assembly: "The carriages were drawn up in the shadow of the houses; there was a dispute going on between the postillions and the drivers of the carriages"; but he does not say *he saw them;* and if he did see them in the distance as he rode up the town, as is very probable, he would certainly have done his best to avoid passing near these carriages, which he knew to be accompanied by three resolute men from whom he had everything to fear. This is, indeed, the only version by which we can harmonise the statements of the witnesses and actors in the drama, and can avoid bringing a charge of imposture—as Victor Fournel and so many others have been reduced to doing—against the very curious and picturesque statement of James Brisack, one of the superintendents of M. de Choiseul's stables.

GUILLAUME.

It was there that for the last fourteen hours the relay had been ready—horses bridled and harnessed, postillions booted—in charge of two young officers, M. de Bouillé *fils* and M. de Raigecourt, who were waiting to take up their position at the upper end of the town till some messenger—Goguelat, Moustier, or Valory—should warn them of the approach of the royal carriages. Although the hour that had been approximately fixed for the King's arrival was long past, the two young men, true to their instructions, did not move from the hotel. They had supped at ten o'clock, and to allay suspicion in the mind of the landlord they ordered beds to be prepared for them, retired to their room, extinguished the lights to give the impression that they were in bed, and sat watching at the open window.

James Brisack, one of the postillions, having supped with his comrade, Tom, was enjoying the fresh air at the door of the *Grand Monarque*. At half past ten they took a stroll together round the square in the lower town, which was quite deserted and very quiet. They were returning to the inn when Brisack heard "several strokes of a whip, and a man crying ho! hu! ho!" As there was no moon, he did not see the man, but he called to him and asked him what he wanted. The man, who was Guillaume,[1] answered "that he was chasing a carriage, and was calling for someone to tell him whether it had been seen to pass." Brisack assured him that no carriage had been seen since the morning, except a cabriolet conveying some of M. de Choiseul's people; the other explained that "that was not what he was looking for; the carriage he was inquiring for was a large berline which could not have passed more than half an hour ago"; upon which Brisack again declared that no berline had gone through the town. Guillaume spoke with Brisack for some minutes, then he crossed the bridge again and returned to the upper town. Brisack was strolling about for another quarter of an hour in the square in front of the church, before going

[1] It was Guillaume and not Drouet, for the latter would not have failed to record in his very detailed—and very lengthy—Narrative this chance by which one of the servants posted there to facilitate the progress of the royal family had, on the contrary, a share in the arrest, through giving this information.

in to stretch himself on the straw near his horses—for M. de Bouillé had given strict orders that all was to be ready at the first word of command—when he heard a disturbance on the farther side of the river, the sound of a dispute and of people calling to one another. Brisack ran to the spot. The inn of the *Bras d'Or*, kept by Jean Leblanc, at a distance of a few steps from the bridge, in the Rue de la Basse Cour, which led to the upper town, was still lit up. This was the scene of the disturbance.[1]

Drouet and Guillaume were there; also some youths of the town, all patriots: there was Paul, the brother of Jean Leblanc, with Joseph Ponsin, Régnier the lawyer, and Justin George, Captain of the National Guard and son of the Mayor and local deputy to the Assembly. They had lingered to talk politics with two visitors to the town, Thennevin from Les Islettes, and Delion from Montfaucon, who had come to Varennes that day on business, and were to sleep at the *Bras d'Or*.[2] Drouet, being assured by Guillaume that the royal berline had not yet crossed the bridge, had returned up the main street to the entrance to the town, had seen in the distance the lanterns of the two carriages, "crouching for safety under the houses,"[3] and heard the discussion between Moustier and the postillions, who refused to go further. He ran down again as quickly as possible to the *Bras d'Or*, and dropped like a bolt from the blue into the little group: "Be on your guard; a berline is on the point of passing, full of travellers who are most probably the King and his family." Drouet thinks he recognised them at Sainte-Ménehould, but is not quite sure. He took time by the forelock and has stolen a march on them. . . . There is not an instant to lose if they mean to stop the carriages—which are there at the top of the street—and to call on the travellers within to show their passports. This is indeed agitating! The King! At Varennes! In that peaceful little town, where all the morning the women and girls have been sitting before their doors twining garlands

[1] *Déclaration de James Brisack, attaché a l'écurie de M. le Duc de Choiseul*, appended to Choiseul's Narrative.

[2] Second official Report of the Municipality of Varennes.

[3] Drouet's Account to the Assembly. *Parliamentary Archives*, vol. xxvii. p. 508.

of moss and chains of paper for the Feast of Corpus Christi two days hence![1] Quick—they are putting their heads together; what shall they do? Give the alarm? No—first barricade the bridge: Père Wacquant's van of furniture[2] is waiting there, loaded and ready to start; it will do finely for a barricade. Drouet and Régnier drag it to the bridge and leave it there, across the road;[3] and as they pass they awake the grocer Sauce, *procureur* of the commune, who lives nearly opposite the *Bras d'Or*. Sauce covers his shirt with an overcoat, and hastily comes out of his house; being informed of the situation in a word, he runs to the house of his neighbour, Pultier the tanner, who in the absence of the Mayor fills the office of that functionary; he then returns to his house, calls his children, and bids them dress themselves and run crying "Fire!" about the town; then he comes back to the *Bras d'Or*, furnished this time with a lantern. The two brothers Leblanc are armed with muskets; and as the main street, which slopes sharply all the way from Préfontaine's house to the bridge, passes through, at about the middle of its course, a covered passage built under the church of St. Gengoult, they take up their position under the arch at the very moment that the carriages are heard approaching at a foot's pace, with the drag on the wheels. First a horseman appears; it is Valory. They wait till he is under the arch, and then

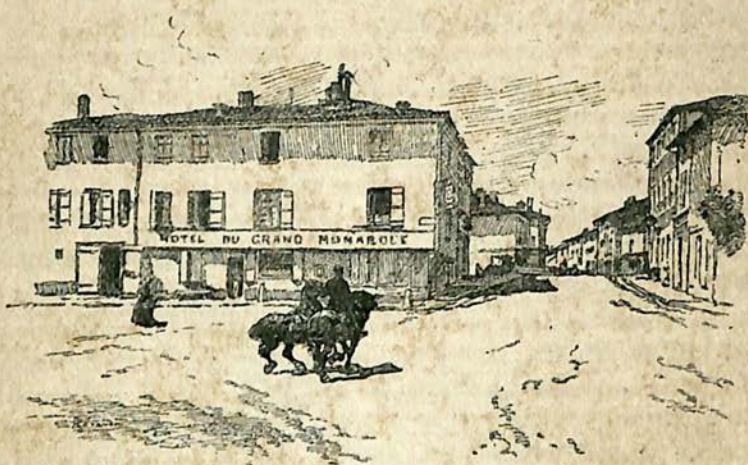
[1] Statement of James Brisack.

[2] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37.

[3] "We bethought ourselves that it would not do to give the call to arms or sound the alarm before having barricaded the streets and the bridge by which the King was to leave the town. There was on the spot, quite close, a large carriage loaded with furniture; we placed it crosswise on the bridge, then we went to fetch several other carriages, so that the roads were blocked to such a degree that it was impossible to pass."—Drouet's Account to the Assembly, *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 508.

Gabriel writes: "They *upset* the carriage across the bridge." They *placed* it there, on the contrary, without making any noise, since the two officers, Bouillé *fils* and Raigecourt, who were in the *Grand Monarque* ten yards from the bridge, heard nothing. "Having returned to our room," relates Raigecourt, "we extinguished the lights in order to make believe that we were in bed; we opened the windows and kept profoundly silent. Towards midnight, several persons passed to and fro in the street, but without much noise; they even stopped under our windows, but it was at no time possible to hear what they were talking about. Between a quarter of an hour and half an hour afterwards the tocsin was rung."—*Exposé de la conduite de M. de Raigecourt*, appended to de Bouillé's Memoirs.

suddenly the two men spring out of the darkness. "Halt! Stand, or we fire!" Valory dismounts, "protesting against this unpardonable violence towards peaceable travellers." The cabriolet draws up abruptly under the arch, and amid the shouts of the postillions the sudden jerk is inevitably repeated by the six horses of the berline, so closely is it following the other carriage. The Leblancs had approached the



THE "GRAND MONARQUE" HOTEL AT VARENNES.

cabriolet; the two women-of-the-bedchamber showed their frightened faces at the window; on being asked for their passports they answered "that they were in the second carriage," and then, overcome with fear, they alighted from the cabriolet. The two brothers went forward to the berline, which had drawn up at the entrance to the arch, and seemed colossal as it loomed there in the shadow, with its two great lamps and reflectors and its enormous pyramid of luggage. The windows were already lowered, and Madame de Tourzel, with an anxious face, was leaning out. Behind the Leblancs were Thennevin and Delion, also armed with muskets; Justin George, Ponsin, Coquillard, all of whom were National Guards, and armed; and the *procureur* Sauce bearing his lantern. Some hussars who

were sauntering about the town had joined the group, attracted by the noise.[1]

The berline was surrounded. Where are the passports?

[1] The reader will be surprised that the sixty hussars quartered in Varennes, and intended to secure the King's safety as he passed through the town, do not here appear in the story. The reason is that they did not appear in reality. After having very conscientiously studied this particular point in the history of the King's flight I was reduced to asking myself what could possibly have become of those soldiers. We have seen that Moustier, whose first thought had been to get himself taken to their quarters, had found the place *dark and silent:* he did not find their officer Rohrig there. And what seems still more extraordinary is that at eleven o'clock—that is to say, at the time when the royal carriages were in the upper town—Captain de Raigecourt went to Lieutenant Rohrig and warned him "to prepare instantly to escort a treasure which would soon arrive, and which he was to take to Dun." On Rohrig objecting "that his detachment being of sixty men, it would suffice to take forty," Raigecourt answered "that it would be better that he should hold his whole detachment in readiness." Raigecourt adds that Rohrig "repaired instantly to the quarters of his hussars to comply with the order to have his sixty horses saddled and bridled, and the men beside them." It may have been, Raigecourt observes, a quarter past eleven.

It must have been at this precise moment that Moustier arrived at the spot and found no one there! I repeat that it is in every way inexplicable. The Marquis de Bouillé (Count Louis) declares plainly that as soon as the King was arrested *the detachment of hussars was instantly mustered;* but Count Louis was not there; it was his brother the Chevalier who, together with Raigecourt, had been put in charge of the relay of horses at Varennes. Raigecourt, then, is the person to be believed. He remarks: "During the day I had noticed that all the hussars I had seen were drunk." However drunk they may be, sixty hussars, in a little town as small as Varennes, do not disappear suddenly and simultaneously. And not one of them can we find. For it is not possible to adopt Drouet's version in his account to the Assembly. At the moment that the Varennois stopped the carriage, he declared, the latter was suddenly surrounded *by hussars with swords in their hands.* None but he gave this detail. Madame Neuville, who was the first to alight from the carriage, asserts to the contrary in her examination "that she did not see any hussars or dragoons on the road, even at Varennes." It is not conceivable, moreover, that if the hussars had really been there, they should not have succeeded in dispersing the eight or ten *bourgeois* who barred the way. Raigecourt declares that an hour later, after all Varennes had been awakened and was in the street, "ten really determined men, perhaps less, might have routed this bewildered mob." All that I have been able to find in the Archives of the War Office with regard to this strange circumstance is the following note concerning the officer who commanded the detachment: "Léonard Rohrig, born at Neuhausen in the diocese of Worms, April 27, 1768, acting second-lieutenant in the regiment of the Lauzun Hussars, May 1st, 1787, second-lieutenant on active service May 27, 1789, was present at the affair of Nancy on August 31, 1790, abandoned his post on the 22nd June, 1791, at Varennes, on the occasion of the King's arrest."—*Archives of the War Office.*

Nothing more transpires as to this officer and his inexplicable disappearance; indeed, it seems as though we should never know what became of him.

"Be quick, please, we are in a hurry to reach the end of our journey," said the Queen's voice sharply. Madame de Tourzel produced the passport, and handed it to the terrified Madame Brunier, who was standing near the door, while Madame Neuville, much upset, pressed closely to her side. The two ladies were then pushed into the hall of the *Bras d'Or*, the entrance to which was just beyond the arch; and here they found Drouet, Guillaume, Pultier the municipal officer, and a few late revellers, among whom were four or five hussars,[1] half drunk and wholly indifferent, who understood nothing and spoke only German. Sauce took the paper from the hands of Madame Brunier and read it aloud deliberately. "This passport is perfectly valid," said a voice. To this other voices agreed; it was a false alarm: there was no reason to prevent the travellers from going on their journey. Such was the general opinion, when Drouet, in a fury, intervened—raged, swore, stormed, attacking now Pultier and Sauce, now Madame Neuville and Madame Brunier, who looked on astounded. "I am certain now that it is the King and his family," he cried. "If you allow him to go away into a foreign country you will be guilty of the crime of high treason."[2] The men of Varennes, disturbed by this bold assertion, but fearful of responsibility, hesitated and took counsel with one another. It was decided to detain the travellers till the morning. Then Sauce returned to the carriage, which had passed through the arch during this colloquy, and was drawn up in front of the *Bras d'Or*. He was still holding his lantern, and now thrust it at arm's

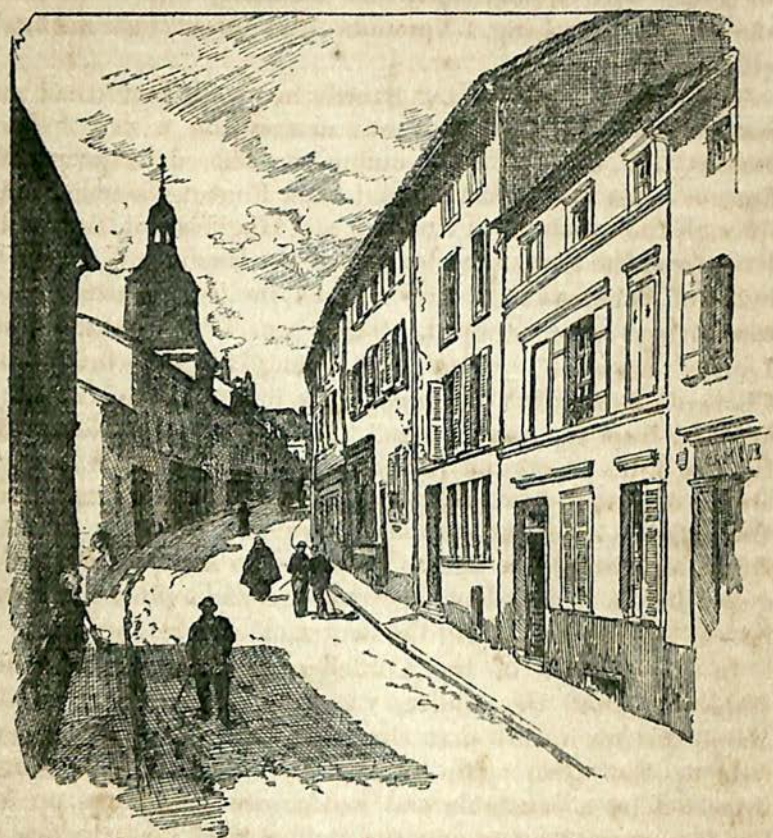
[1] "She saw, in the lower room in which she was, four or five hussars asking for drink."—Examination of Madame Neuville.

[2] "Pultier, the municipal officer who was acting as mayor, some of his colleagues, and even the *procureur* of the commune, thought the passport that was shown to them was certainly valid, and should secure permission for the travellers to go on their way; the greater number, indeed, approved of the idea. It was Drouet who opposed it so violently, appealing to the municipal officers, to the people who had already crowded round, to the travellers themselves, behaving like a madman, and frightening these poor people about their responsibility by repeating over and over again in different words: 'I am sure that the carriage we have stopped contains the King and his family: if you allow him to go on into a foreign country you will be guilty of the crime of treason,' that at last he carried everyone with him willy-nilly."—Victor Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*. (Information given by eye-witnesses.)

length into the berline, with the object of casting light on all the faces, but as he had never seen the King or the Queen, his perplexity was as great as before. He addressed the latter, however, telling her that the party must alight, and that the passport would be endorsed in the morning. The travellers protested, saying that the least delay might cause them considerable inconvenience, for which the municipality of Varennes would be held responsible. A discussion followed, in which Sauce merely reiterated, "To-morrow morning we shall see." Moreover, "the horses could not go on without a rest; the roads were bad; the night was so dark that they would come to grief." Yet there was no hint that could lead the fugitives to believe that they were recognised. "Come, postillions, let us go on," said the King, taking the matter into his own hands. But instantly the muskets were raised, with the cry, "Not a step farther, or we fire!" The King, leaning out of the window, saw that a large collection of people had gathered round the horses; the postillions had dismounted; the sound of distant shouts was heard, rousing the town, while close at hand the tocsin was ringing above the arch, in the tower of St. Gengoult. Lights were appearing in the windows; the whole town was awaking.

It was all very well to bid them alight, but where were they to spend the night? Sauce politely put his house at the disposal of the travellers. It was but three hours to the dawn. The door was opened and they alighted, the crowd drawing back. Were these indeed the King and Queen? No one present had ever seen them; they had been pictured quite otherwise. They took a few steps in the street, eagerly followed. Sauce's grocery shop stood on the left—a wooden building with a narrow frontage, into which Sauce preceded his guests, guiding them with his lantern lifted high. And now they were in his shop—a low room with rafters hung about with dangling candles. The sound of the tocsin, which was still ringing, was now reinforced by the noise of the drum beating to arms. By this time the whole population of Varennes was in the street. What an awakening! The King, the King of France, and the beautiful Queen, and their own Dauphin whose picture they had so often seen,

were at Père Sauce's house! The men seized their muskets, their scythes, old sabres, anything they could find by way of a weapon: the women ran downstairs in their night-garments. At Sauce's house nothing was to be seen; the travellers were



THE RUE DE LA BASSE COUR AND SAUCE'S HOUSE AT VARENNES.

in the room behind the shop and the doors were closed; but before the *Bras d'Or* the crowd gathered to stare at the two women-of-the-bedchamber, who, motionless and overwhelmed, were seated beside a table in the taproom.

This end of the street, usually so deserted and quiet, was on this night in a constant state of commotion. Some men dragged out some old pieces of ordnance that had been

preserved at the town hall,[1] and mounted them on the Clermont road, which they were barricading by means of two pieces of wood and some faggots they had taken from a shed.[2] In a moment they had made all their arrangements for a siege with a spontaneity and unanimity of decision that were really surprising. Varennes that night was inspired with heroism.

The King had not been at Sauce's house for more than an hour when the whole town was aroused by a cry, "The hussars, the hussars are coming!" The detachment of Lauzun's men had at last arrived from Pont-de-Somme-Vesle through the woods, with Choiseul and Goguelat at its head. Even from the forest they had heard the tocsin and seen the lights of Varennes. As they reached the first houses of the town they were stopped. "*Qui vive?*" "France—the Lauzun hussars!" Two men clung to the bridle of Choiseul's horse: "You cannot come into the town without an order from the corporation." He struck them aside with the flat of his sword and passed on,[3] dashing into the lighted streets of the crowded, delirious, agitated town. He noticed the horseless cabriolet and berline side by side in a narrow street, and farther on he was surprised to see "a numerous guard before a poor-looking house"; but he pushed on, for he was looking for Rohrig the lieutenant and his hussars.

In the quarter of the Cordeliers he learnt from some stablemen that the soldiers "had all dispersed to drink about the town, and that there was no officer." Then he rode up the street again to join his men, who were being inspected by a constable and had drawn themselves up in line in a narrow square opposite Préfontaine's house, before a building that had stood there for six centuries and contained the town hall, the courts of justice, the prison, and the market-place.[4] Choiseul harangued his men, informing them

[1] There was at Varennes in 1791 a company of artillery commanded by Etienne Radet. The guns, which numbered two, were, according to Drouet, obsolete; one of them, it appears, was of wood. See the *Mémoires du Général Radet*, by A. Combier, 1892.

[2] Choiseul's Narrative. [3] Choiseul's Narrative.

[4] *Manuscrit de Antonin Amable Coulonvaux*, late door-keeper and treasurer of the parish church of Varennes. "There was in 1791, in the Castle Square, an ancient edifice known as the *Palais*. It was the court-

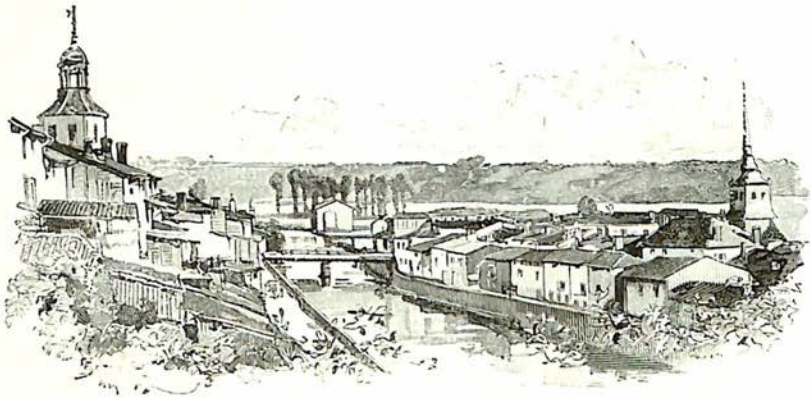
"that those whom they were to save, or die in the attempt, were the King and Queen, and that they would win for themselves everlasting glory."[1] The worn out hussars looked at each other in bewilderment; none of them understood French. *Der König, die Königin!* was all they grasped. At that moment the dim outline of Sauce's tall, spare figure appeared upon the scene: "it had occurred to the poor man, perplexed as he was, and shaken by the denials of his guests, to fetch from his house at the courts of justice a certain judge named Destez, who had married at Versailles and had often seen the royal family. Destez hastily dressed himself, bidding his wife "not to be anxious, as he would come back." Sauce led him away, and it was then that, in passing the town hall, he overheard Choiseul's harangue to the hussars. Whereupon he too made them a speech, which naturally they understood as little as the other.

"My fine fellows, we think the King is in our town. But you are too good citizens to encourage his flight, which can only be accomplished at the cost of bloodshed!"[2] The men looked vacantly at each other: Choiseul gave the order "Fours right!" and hurried them off at a trot. This charge emptied the main street; the women screamed, and the mob crowded round the doors to let the soldiers pass. In the light of the rays that streamed from every window the horsemen crossed the town, sword in hand; then, as they reached Sauce's house, halted and drew themselves up in line before it. And the royal family, from their corner in the upper room to which they had been led, heard the trampling of the horses and the sound of the words of command, and exchanged hopeful glances. "Here are the hussars: we are saved." The door opened and Sauce entered, pushing Destez

house of the bailliwick of Argonne or Clermont, whose bench sat in the town of Varennes, and it entirely covered the ground of the square. It was very spacious, and comprised the prisons, the public market-place, &c. This old buildlng was still used as a town hall, but as it had fallen into ruins it was determined to pull it down between the years 1793 and 1795. At the time of the King's arrest the present town hall in the market-square was being built; it was raised on the site of the old public bakeries of the Prince de Condé."

[1] Choiseul's Narrative, and the Reports of M. Aubriot that are appended to it.

[2] Second Official Report of the Municipality of Varennes.



BRIDGE OVER THE AIRE AT VARENNES.

PRÉFONTAINE'S HOUSE AT VARENNES.

before him. The latter looked about him. Where are they, then? Then he saw the group in the murky darkness: the three women seated, holding the two children, and, walking to and fro beside them with a characteristic waddle, a fat, sullen-looking man in a coarse perûke and a grey coat. There was no doubt about the matter: this was Louis XVI.

Destez fell upon his knees.

"Ah, Sire!" he said. [1]

Then, suddenly overcome by emotion, Louis XVI confessed the truth.

"Well then, yes, I am your King!"

And he folded Sauce the grocer in his arms. Having

[1] When Victor Hugo visited Varennes in 1838 he picked up the following tradition there: "This is the story they tell in that country. The King was eagerly denying that he was the King (which Charles I would not have done, we may observe in passing). He was about to be released for the lack of someone to identify him with certainty, when one M. d'Ethé arrived on the scene, who had some reason, I do not know what, for hating the Court. This M. d'Ethé (I do not know if that is the right way of spelling the name, but any way will do to spell the name of a traitor), this man, then, approached the King after the manner of Judas, saying, *Good morning, Sire.* That was enough; the King was held a prisoner. There were five royal persons in the carriage; this wretched man struck down all the five with one word. For Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth this *Good morning, Sire,* meant the guillotine, for the Dauphin it meant the agony of the Temple, and for Madame Royale exile and the extinction of her race."—*Le Rhin,* Letter III.

It is very probable that M. Destez was both unconscious and undesirous of committing so many crimes by recognising the King; but it is always good to record a tradition, and indeed it is very certain that Victor Hugo has here only added a dramatic touch to a local legend. What reason for hating the Court could this judge have? I do not know. But there is no doubt that the letters of Madame Destez, which are lying in a portfolio of National Archives, are written with an extremely sharp pen, and are singularly hostile to the royal family.

Jacques Destez, born in 1758, was a son of the Prévot de Brieulles (Ardennes). We hear of him as a merchant in Paris or at Versailles (?) when he married in the latter town before the Revolution. He married Marie Henriette Lasalle. The marriage, although entered in the registers of Versailles, took place at Garches (Seine-et-Oise) in May, 1782. In 1789 Destez was a delegate of the *tiers état* (*Almanach* of 1790), and he had just been appointed a judge at Varennes at the time of the King's arrest. He was afterwards a judge at Montmédy, then at Vaucouleurs, and finally at Saint-Mihiel, where he remained from 1795 to 1800. In 1807 he was a notary at Varennes, where he died, June 29, 1824.—(Private information.)

Marie Henriette Lasalle, the wife of Destez, born in 1763, whose letters we shall frequently quote, was the daughter of Henry Lasalle, Superintendent of the Queen's Fuel, one of the 194 officials in the *Seven Offices* that were included in the department of the Chief Steward. These seven offices comprised the departments of the Goblet, of the Table, of the Bread-basket, of the Wine-cellar, of the Kitchen, of the Fruitery, and of

embraced him, as well as Destez, several times, he next embraced Pultier, Coquillard, Cochou, Mauchauffé, and all the members of the council of the commune, and all the municipal officers who were present. At every fresh salute he was much affected: all who took part in the scene were moved to tears; while the Queen, though more distant in manner and less familiar, was "in a state of extreme agitation."[1] The King became confiding at once, and explained calmly "that he had left Paris because his family was daily in danger of perishing there; that he had had enough of living in the midst of daggers and bayonets, and that he had come to take refuge among his faithful subjects."[2] Everyone was speaking at once: in a moment the King was surrounded by friends, and it was agreed by common consent that he was to resume his interrupted journey to Montmédy at dawn, escorted by fifty hussars and fifty national guards.

The room in which this scene was enacted was at the back of the house, and was connected with another, slightly larger, which faced the street, and contained the head of a narrow staircase leading from the ground-floor. The shop, the kitchen, the staircase, and the large room on the first floor were all thronged with an inquisitive crowd who had contrived to slip into the house, and kept up a constant sound of trampling, shouting, shuffling, and pushing, in their efforts to catch a glimpse of the prisoners, whom they could see through the open door, where two peasants stood on guard armed with pitchforks.[3] The Dauphin and his sister lay upon a bed asleep, with their hands clenched. Near them was seated Madame de Tourzel, dozing with her forehead on her hand; Madame Neuville and Madame Brunier, who had at last left the *Bras d'Or*, were sitting

the Coal-hole (wood-cellar, coal-cellar, care of fires, &c.). It would be very interesting to know why Destez, having married the daughter of one of the Queen's officials, was supposed to have a reason for hating the Court.

[1] Second Official Report of the Municipality of Varennes. First draft.

[2] Second Official Report of the Municipality of Varennes. Final draft.

[3] Choiseul's Narrative. One of them was called Jean Louis Druard, and was a hammerer at the iron-works.

Archives of the Record Office of the Tribunal of Saint-Mihiel.

beside her. At the back of the room sat the three body-guards; while the King, walking to and fro quite placidly, gave pleasant answers to such as had succeeded in pushing into the room. The Queen was very nervous, Madame Elizabeth patient and resigned. Near them stood a table on which bread, wine, and some glasses had been placed. Madame Sauce had appealed to the good-nature of her neighbour, Madame Bellet, who was helping her in this great domestic upheaval, and did not leave the house that night.

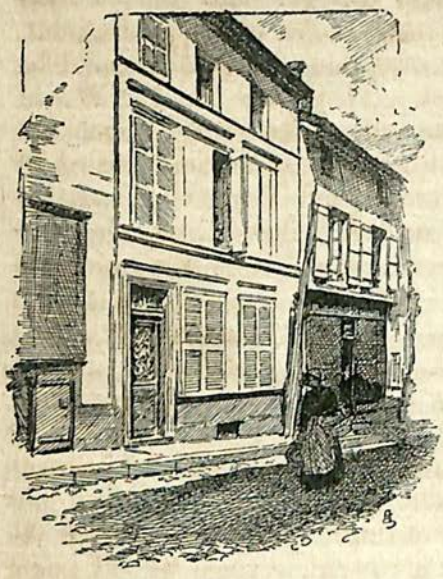
Choiseul and Goguelat had come up to pay their respects to the King, and to ask for his commands. Damas, too, had arrived with only six of his dragoons, and he also had reported himself to his Majesty. The three suggested that they should, with a charge of cavalry, scatter the crowd that obstructed the street, thus clearing a passage for the royal family; but the King thought the scheme unnecessary. Why employ force? The municipality had promised "to supply him with the means of reaching Montmédy" on the one condition that he should defer his departure until the dawn; and moreover, the news must by that time have reached Bouillé at Stenay, nine leagues from Varennes, and he would soon appear with the main body of troops: it was better to be patient for a while. The King apparently lost none of his placidity, while the Queen regaled Choiseul, Goguelat, and Damas in her charming way with all the details of her escape from the Tuileries.[1] As for them, they made the most of the opportunity, like true courtiers, to "push their interests" and pay their court.

The crowd without was swelling continually. Those who occupied the best places, facing Sauce's house, remained there obstinately, among the horses of the hussars. In the faint light of the dawning day it was possible to distinguish three of Damas' dragoons guarding the shop door—Sergeants Saint-Charles and Lapotherie, and the adjutant Foucq—with their olive-green coats and pink facings, their white knee-breeches and huge boots.[2] Every window, every

[1] Damas' Narrative. "She charmed away our impatience to a certain degree by her interesting story."

[2] Regulations of 1786.

skylight, every roof, was crowded with faces, and from the two ends of the street an endless stream came rushing to join the throng—men in blouses, women in Lorraine caps, national guards armed with scythes, stakes, or venerable muskets—all awakened by the tocsin as it echoed from village to village, and irresistibly attracted by the magic words, "The King, the Queen, and the little Dauphin are at Varennes." In this multitude, so closely packed that its excitement spread like fever, the strangest rumours were originated; the smallest incident was observed, exaggerated, distorted. It was said that Lieutenant Rohrig had disappeared, and that his men could not get into the convent of the Cordeliers because it was blockaded by the National Guard. At half past three in the morning Mangin appeared from the grocery shop, a man well known throughout the district, for he combined at Varennes the functions of an attorney with the practice of surgery. The news spread quickly that he was starting for Paris to obtain instructions from the National Assembly, and he passed through the crowd amid shouts of applause, grasping the many hands that were held out to him, and waving his hat. A short time afterwards it became known that Bouillé was arriving with his troops: someone[1] in Romagne had seen him hurrying by at the head of the Royal Germans. "Bouillé is coming! Bouillé is at the gates of Varennes. He is



SAUCE'S HOUSE.

[1] Barthe of the Constabulary. He had escaped from the Uhlans by running into the woods. Official Report of Varennes.

coming to run off with the King, to massacre the patriots and burn the town." A veritable uproar followed. "To arms! Open all the gates!" In obedience to this the gates were opened wide, to allow the crowd to fly as soon as the Royal Germans appeared.[1] And where were the hussars? They were nearly asleep on their weary horses: fatigue and the movements of the pushing mob had gradually broken their ranks, but here and there their shakos of dusty black felt, their blue pelisses, and their sheepskin schabracques could be seen, dominating the crowd. They were asked, "Would they charge the crowd if the order were given?" but not one of them understood the question, till someone hurried to fetch a woman who knew German, and she, having been led to the spot, was told what to say. The soldiers, when she spoke to them, were overjoyed, and they were soon on good terms with the bystanders.[2] Wine was brought, and they all drank and laughed together. At that moment Goguelat came out of Sauce's house, and mounting his horse gave the order, "Fours right!" The hussars, however, did not move. A few of them cried as best they could, "*Vive la Nation!*" to which the applauding crowd responded "*Vive Lauzun!*" Goguelat grew pale and made his horse rear; then all was tumult. Roland, the major of the National Guard, seized the bridle, and Goguelat drew his sword, crying, "I am going through! I swear by my head that I shall take the King. I'll have you all massacred and your town sacked!" He raised his sword, threatening Roland, but the latter shot him point-blank with his pistol. A great cry arose from the crowd as the officer fell from his horse and was quickly borne out of the throng, though, as the ball only touched his shoulder, the wound was but a slight one. Roland was overcome with distress, and apologised almost tearfully as he carried the victim to the *Bras d'Or* and dressed the wound himself. Goguelat soon reappeared, and was in his turn cheered by the reassured mob, though the hussars were still immovable, and continued to drink and to cry "*Vive la Nation!*" As the sun climbed higher in the sky the people

[1] Narratives of Choiseul and Damas. Official Report of Varennes.
[2] Ancelon, *Fuite de Louis XVI.*

grew excited by their success; they became conscious of their power; they felt themselves irresistibly strong. They chattered gaily and chaffed each other and sang; and then suddenly there fell a great silence. . . . A window on the first story of Sauce's house was opened, and the King appeared, standing, with his grey coat, his bottle-green overcoat, his short peruke. He looked out, bowing and waving his hand. A mighty shout arose, "*Vive le Roi! Vive la Nation!*" but also "*Vive Lauzun! Vive les hussards!*" It was five o'clock in the morning.

Later on M. de Signémont, who had been an officer in the army and wore the cross of St. Louis, was observed walking about. He lived at Neuvilly, whence he had hastened at daybreak to Varennes, and in two hours he had made the place capable of standing a siege, with barricades at all the approaches to the town, and pickets and guards. All the national guards who had come from the surrounding villages he ranged in a double line from Sauce's house to the road to Paris, making the line longer and longer as the peasants continued to arrive from the neighbouring districts. There were more than ten thousand of them, it was said.

Sauce came and went between his own house and the town hall. He was seen walking about gravely, his face drawn and pale,[1] his eyes staring and almost wild.

One of Damas' soldiers who had dealings with him on this morning of the 22nd was struck by his dejection: he "appeared to be in a trance."[2]

And indeed this incredibly dramatic scene had distracted all Varennes. By six o'clock in the morning it was almost impossible to move about the town, so quickly did the crowd increase. The King's circle was confident, or pretended to be, that the journey to Montmédy would be resumed; but the municipal authorities were firmly resolved not to take the responsibility of allowing the King to go, but to await orders from Paris; and in both these camps there was much agitation but no action. At the gates of the town, on the Chépy side, a small body of hussars, the advance-guard of

[1] Choiseul's Narrative. [2] Rémy's Narrative.

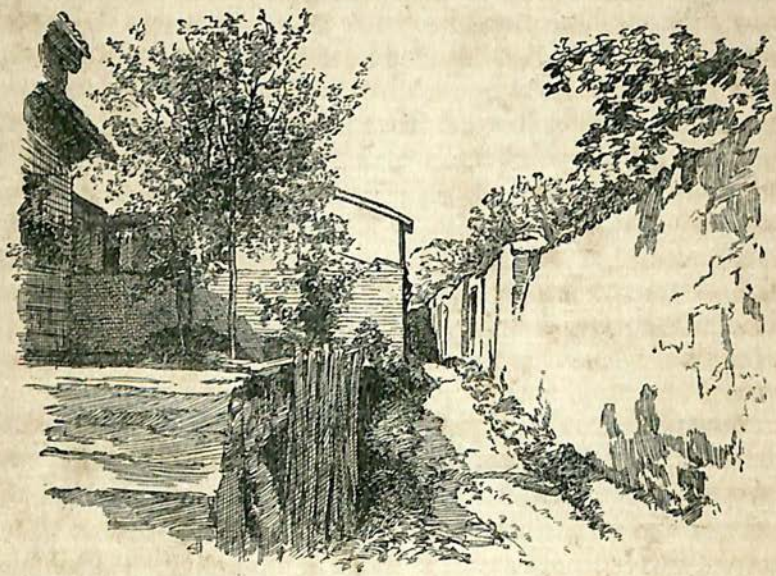
GOGUELAT.

Bouillé's army, was waiting among the vineyards doing nothing; mingled with the crowd in the streets, the hussars and a few dragoons brought by Damas were staggering drunkenly; the houses were overflowing, and everywhere there was feasting, while the housewives baked bread and cooked pies; in the gardens the cherry-trees were robbed; men were walking about in boots made of hay or straw; at the cross-roads the carts were tied up without their horses, shafts in air; in the courtyards the post-horses and the chargers of the soldiers lay side by side on improvised litters; and from this seething mass of living beings there rose an atmosphere of excitement that almost amounted to real enthusiasm. It was known that Bouillé and his Germans were hastening to the town, and these French peasants, who had never handled a musket, had decided to fight; their hearts were beating as one, and they had but one thought among them—to keep their King, who was being reft from them. Every man who passed by Sauce's house thought it suitable to show his love for the royal family by shouting "To Paris!"

No one wished or dared to act decidedly, and from the confusion of those anxious, irresolute hours one or two incidents stand out conspicuously. At about four o'clock in the morning Florentin, the captain of the guard of Véry, entered Sauce's house with a paper in his hand: "Here is a letter addressed to the King," he said. Sauce read the direction, which was composed of these words: *To you two, to you three.* "Sire," said the grocer, "here is a letter *for us two, for us three;* do you recognise this form of address?" "No," replied the King, shrugging his shoulders. In the fear that this missive might contain "something dangerous," it was given over to Radet, the officer in command of the local artillery.[1] Shortly afterwards this same Radet, in one of his constant perambulations between the street and the grocer's shop, recognised Choiseul, whom he had seen formerly in the house of M. de Puységur, whose secretary he had been; and he was immediately surrounded by the

[1] Florentin's Statement. Archives of the Record Office of Saint-Mihiel. Radet's trial.

royal family, who tried to conciliate him. Radet accordingly attempted to cajole the guard at the bridge, declaring that "if the King were allowed to pass it would be greatly to the advantage of Varennes";[1] but this suggestion was greeted with muttered disapproval, and a voice—that of Jean Pierre Comtoir—cried, "He comes from Paris; let him go back there!" It was Radet, too, who resorted to a ruse in



THE LANE OF LA VÉRADE BEHIND SAUCE'S HOUSE AT VARENNES.

suggesting to the people of Varennes that if the King should insist on continuing his journey, or if the uhlans were to appear, they "should remove him from the house by the back way and take him into the woods."[2] Every time he entered the house he was met by the same question: "*Capitaine*, are they not harnessing the horses?"[3] while in the street there was always the same refrain: "To Paris!

[1] Statements of Pierre Verrye of Montblainville, of Jean Rolland, a merchant of Montblainville, and of J. B. Prieur, manager of the iron-works at Montblainville. Archives of the Record Office of Saint-Mihiel.

[2] Statement of Jean Martin Raillet, cooper. Archives of the Record Office of Saint-Mihiel.

[3] Statement of Jean Martin Raillet. Archives of Saint-Mihiel.

Harness the horses to take them to Paris!" The general indecision produced discussions which soon became quarrels. Jean François Roland, major in the Varennes guard, and Louis Fouger, his lieutenant, criticised the position of the artillerymen, whom Radet persisted in leaving in touch with the hussars.[1] Radet it seems, was won over to the King, but he had no intention of appearing to "make compacts" with him. At five o'clock nothing was decided. Louis XVI came from the back room to the room in front, put his head out of the window, and called to Radet, "Tell them to get my carriage ready." Radet did not answer. "Pay attention," said Damas, leaning out of the window; "it is the King who is speaking to you." "I cannot recognise him," said Radet; "I have the orders of the municipality." He went into the shop, however, and when after a few moments he reappeared in the street the people jostled each other in their desire for information. "He still insists on going to Montmédy,"[2] he declared. "No, no, to Paris. To Paris, *or we will shoot him in his carriage!*"[3] Radet once more entered the shop, and on coming out again in a quarter of an hour with "an air of satisfaction" he quieted the disturbance with a word. "All is well—he will return to Paris!"

As a matter of fact, however, no fixed decision had been arrived at. The prisoners in Sauce's shop felt their chances of safety were growing fainter, but they were not yet resigned. In that narrow room, with its low ceiling and its straw-bottomed chairs, the monarchy for which the most sumptuous palaces on earth had been erected was in its death agony. And, to make the drama more complete, it happened that morning that a woman, eighty years of age and more, broke through the ranks of the spectators and made her way into the room. This was the grandmother of the grocer, Sauce. The news had reached her during the night, in the village near Varennes where she lived, that the King was in her grandson's house, and seizing her stick, she

[1] Statement of Louis Fouger. Record Office of Saint-Mihiel.
[2] Statement of Noël Meunier, locksmith at Varennes. Archives of the Record Office of Saint-Mihiel.
[3] Statement of Noël Meunier.

dragged herself to the town. The poor old dame, born in the era of the *Grand Roi*, had venerated royalty all her days, and still clung to the theories of the past. Having greeted the King and Queen with a countrywoman's awkward curtsey, she drew near to the bed on which the children were asleep—the children of France. She meant to give them her blessing, but, bursting into sobs, she fell on her knees beside the bed, and hiding her wrinkled face in the coverlet, she wept long and bitterly.

Such was the farewell of old France to the noble race of her kings, represented by this poor child who was fated never to reign.

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CHAPTER IV

PARIS ON THE SAME DAY

On the 21st June, 1791, the most bewildered man in France, we may be sure, was the Sieur Lemoine, *valet-de-chambre* to Louis XVI. On the previous night, at the Tuileries, he had helped the King into his bed, and had carefully drawn the curtains; then, since it was part of his duty to sleep in the King's room, where he lay on a bed of sacking behind a screen, he had closed the shutters, fastened the inner bolts of the doors,[1] and lighted the night-lamp. Having undressed noiselessly, he attached within reach of the King, as he did every evening, one end of a cord of which the other end was twisted round his own arm, and at about half-past twelve he went to sleep.

At seven o'clock in the morning he unfastened the shutters, and tip-toed across the room to open the door to Hubert and Marquant,[2] pages-of-the-bedchamber; and as soon as these two had cautiously folded the screen, and put away Lemoine's bed in its proper receptacle, the valet approached the royal alcove, and bowing respectfully, said in the usual formula, "Sire, it is seven o'clock."

Then he drew the curtains and found that the bed was empty.

Greatly surprised by this unprecedented failure in the

[1] "Lemoine had drawn the inside bolts as usual."—Statement of E. A. Marquant, *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

[2] Pierre Hubert, page-of-the-palace, fifty-two years old, spent the night in the billiard-room. Louis Antoine Marquant, forty-six years old, secretary and page of the King's bedchamber, slept in the Council Room, "which adjoined the King's room, but was separated from it by a double door."—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

etiquette of the King's bedchamber, he sent Hubert to inquire in the Queen's apartments if the King were there, contrary to his usual habits. Hubert returned in a state of much uneasiness. "The Queen's rooms were still dark." But he had learnt from Lenoble, a page-of-the-toilet, "that M. le Dauphin's room was empty."[1] Lemoine was aghast, and still thinking it impossible that his master, whom he had not left all night, should have disappeared, he explored all the King's private rooms. The royal bed stood between two doors, of which one led into a tiny dressing-room and thence to the Dauphin's room, while the other opened upon a narrow staircase leading to the ground-floor,[2] where the King had arranged an oratory, a little room to which he might retire for rest, and a small blacksmith's shop.[3] All these rooms were empty.

Lemoine returned in great distress.

As the half-hour had just struck, he decided to open the door into the Council Room, where the attendants who filled the minor offices of the bedchamber were waiting, greatly surprised by the unwonted delay. Among them were Gentil, valet-of-the-wardrobe, and Beaugé, the first page,[4] whom Lemoine informed of the King's absence. The two high windows of the Council Room were wide open above the Carrousel; in the Galerie de Diane the polished floors were being rubbed with wax; the house-porters were folding up their beds; the valets, draped in wrappers, were powdering their hair. The scene was like a camp at the hour of the

[1] "The Sieur Lemoine . . . observed to the said valet that he must inquire at the Queen's apartments whether the King were there, and the *valet-de-chambre* (of the Queen) answered that all was still dark.—Statement of Pierre Hubert.

[2] "There is a way of communicating between the King's bedroom and the Dauphin's apartments, and another door opening on a little private staircase that leads down to his study, etc., on the ground-floor, on the same story as the Queen's rooms, with which it communicates."—Marquant's Statement. *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

[3] *Le Château des Tuileries*, by P. J. A. R. D. E. (Roussel d'Epinal), 1802.

[4] Antoine Philippe Gentil, valet of the King's wardrobe, thirty-nine years old. Louis Joachim Filleul Beaugé, page-of-the-bedchamber, seventeen years old. "He entered the King's rooms at seven o'clock; M. Lemoine, coming out of the bedroom, announced that the King was not there."

reveillé. As the news spread the whole household assembled hastily, stockings hanging, brushes in hand, clubs untied. A water-carrier,[1] whose office was to supply the Dauphine's bath, carried his buckets round the salons in a state of great emotion, while frightened scullions hurried from the kitchen. Among the general lamentations were heard expressions of incredulity. "You think I am joking! I'll lay odds that they are gone." Thus spoke Poinçot, the King's turnspit, who, having gone into the kitchens, had just heard of the affair from Brisebarre, "an officer in the pastry department." "There is no peace!" sighed Constant the lamp-lighter, with his box of oil under his arm.[2] Then the perplexed attendants from the lower story began to come upstairs, crying that the Queen's doors were still closed. Mademoiselle Streel, a woman-of-the-wardrobe, who every morning was the first to enter the bedchamber, had not been able to fulfil her office. Fouquet, one of Madame Royale's pages-of-the-bedchamber, had been admitted at the usual hour to the young princess's room, but "did not see her lying in bed, as he usually did." He ran to look for Madame Schliek, one of Madame's nurses, and learnt from her servant "that Madame Schliek had gone off, baggage and all; that everyone had gone, not a soul was left."[3] And indeed, the rooms of Madame Gougenot, woman-of-the-bedchamber to the Queen, were empty, and their state of disorder gave evidence of a hasty flitting.[4] The rooms of Madame Brunier, Madame Neuville, and Madame de Tourzel were all deserted. In less than a quarter of an hour the facts were known in every corner of the palace, from the bake-houses in the vaults of the Galerie du Quai to the topmost attic of the fourteen stories in the Pavillon de Marsan; known also in the stables, in the Rue du Dauphin, in the Rue du Chantre, in the houses of the old Louvre, and in the hovels of

[1] Nicolas Vauriant, called Bourguignon, fifty years old, water-carrier, Rue de Rohan.

[2] Statements of Nicolas Poinçot, turnspit for the King's table, and of Pierre Gervais Constant, lamp-lighter.—*Documents déposés au Greffe de la Cour d'Orléans*. Bimbenet, 2nd edition. *Pièces Justificatives*, 15–26.

[3] Statements of Elizabeth Streel, twenty-one years of age, attached to the Queen's wardrobe, and of T. B. Fouquet, fifty-eight years old, page-of-the-bedchamber to Madame, the King's daughter.—Bimbenet. Documents preserved in the Record Office of the Court of Orléans.

[4] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

the Carrousel—the crowded quarters of a multitude of servants and functionaries who came every morning to take up their posts in the Tuileries. Everything came to a standstill instantaneously, exactly as—did one unhook the weights—one of those colossal and useless clocks of complicated mechanism, which tell the days of the week and month, the phases of the moon and times of the tide, strike at the hours, imitate the cuckoo at the quarters, chime at the half-hours, and show a string of people opening doors, turning wheels, coming in, bowing, and retiring with miraculous regularity, would suddenly be paralysed in every wheel.

And this general stupefaction was not without an element of panic, of terror as to what would be said by that formidable city of Paris that was awakening under the clouded sky of a sullen and stormy spring day.[1]

Through the windows of the gallery groups of the National Guard could be seen coming and going in the Cour des Princes from one flight of steps to another, disputing, shouting, gesticulating. Presently there appeared the Captain of the Hundred Swiss Guards, M. de Brissac, apparently indifferent and slightly ironical. Marquant and Gentil had hastened to M. de Liancourt, Grand Master of the Wardrobe, whom they found engaged at his toilet and very incredulous, seeing that he had assisted at the *coucher* on the previous evening, and had only left the King's room at the moment when his Majesty was getting into bed.[2] For that the royal family could have escaped after the *coucher* was over, from that well guarded prison-house, where every door within had its sentinel and every exit its permanent guard, was an idea that occurred to no one; and so the whole distracted household—ushers, valets, pages, porters, scrubbers, water-carriers, scullions, ladies'-maids—waited there, staring vacantly at the wayfarers in the Carrousel, who were standing as though petrified, with their eyes fixed upon the façade of the palace.

For the news had spread in the town with amazing rapidity. It is recorded by a Parisian that at eight o'clock on that day he was barely awake and was still in bed, lulled by the

[1] *Bulletin de l'Observatoire de Paris*, 21st June, 1791.
[2] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

familiar morning sounds, the cries of hawkers and the rumbling of market-carts, "when a murmur arose like the roaring of the sea buffeted by the wind,"[1] and as it came near grew ever louder and more widespread, while the drums beat to quarters. Soon, amid the confusion of sound, it became possible to distinguish words. Every window was opened; heads were thrust out, and from the street a cry arose, "The King has gone! The King has gone!" The news penetrated everywhere at the same moment, like the sound of an explosion. In the main streets, which were crowded in an instant, "throughout the roaring suburbs, at the threshold of every shop and at the door of every house," the people cried to one another, "He is gone!" And spontaneously, impelled by their overpowering anxiety, they all rushed to the Tuileries.

The Carrousel quickly filled. A crowd had gathered on the Pont Royal, to the great perplexity of Philippe Dubois, Captain of the Guard, who was placidly watching these extremely animated people from one of the windows of the Pavillon de Flore. Philippe Dubois was entrusted with the safe keeping of Madame Elizabeth: he had conscientiously seen that one of his men was sleeping on a mattress across the only door of the princess's apartments, and as these were isolated from the rest of the palace and had windows only on the side overlooking the garden and the river, the upheaval of the household had not yet spread to them. Captain Dubois, growing suddenly suspicious, deliberately opened the door of Madame Elizabeth's bedroom. It was empty; but a hanging of tapestry had been lifted, disclosing behind it a cupboard with a movable back, which opened on the still unfurnished gallery that was destined for a museum. The princess, with the help of a key that was found upon the floor, had set this machinery working and had thus escaped.[2]

[1] *Mémoires du Général Baron Thiébault.*

[2] Philippe Dubois, fifty years of age, captain of the second company of the Section du Roule, Rue de Duras. "On the 20th June, at half past ten in the evening, or about that time, he escorted Madame Elizabeth to her room. . . . One of the pages-of-the-bedchamber fastened the door on the inside . . . then one of the chasseurs of the guard, having placed a mattress across the door . . . spent the entire night there. . . . On the 21st, it was only just at eight o'clock that the deponent, going to

Greatly crestfallen, Dubois left his post and repaired to the gallery. He found it looking like a disturbed ant-hill, so great was the universal panic, so wild the stampede before the rising wrath of Paris. The valets were throwing off their livery, the women were hastily tying up parcels; all were scrambling to reach the doors, seeking the darkest passages, or slipping away to the still unobstructed exits by the chapel and the Pavillon de Marsan.

For the Cour des Princes and the Cour Royale were already invaded. A group of officers of the National Guard, with Gouvion, their major-general, who was in charge of the defences of the palace, were hustled and derided and abused by the crowd. Amid the din, Gouvion recounted how on the previous evening he had been warned by a woman of the projected flight; how he had instantly informed the commandant-general, Lafayette; how every door and every gate had been fastened; how two officers in command of battalions, one captain, an adjutant, and a subaltern officer had watched all night in the court; how he, Gouvion, had stayed there himself for several hours and had not seen

the windows overlooking the Pont Royal, perceived a crowd of people coming straight towards the palace, shouting. . . . The deponent, taking his sword in his hand, went to find the page-of-the-bedchamber and ordered him to take him to Madame Elizabeth's room.

"It was in this room that the deponent observed a door or means of exit, which opens, he believes, on the landing that leads to the great gallery that is to be turned into a museum."—Documents preserved in the Record Office of the Court of Orléans. Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives.*

It was no doubt this door that was alluded to in the following statement of Étienne Trompette, joiner to the King, Rue de Bourbon.

"About two or three months ago the Sieur Renard, Inspector of Buildings to the King, ordered from him a cupboard, to be made according to the measurements and models furnished by the said Renard. This cupboard is, to begin with, formed of two doors, opening in front, with one vertical partition in the middle, and a cross partition dividing the cupboard into halves. In this latter partition there is a sliding door running on an iron bar overhead, and hung on wheels to make it move more easily. . . . There are several shelves supported on movable brackets. By removing the shelves it is possible, after having opened one of the two doors in the front of this cupboard and the sliding door in the middle as well as the one at the back, to pass through the cupboard as if it were a door, if the cupboard be placed before a door that opens outwards. The deponent said he had had the said cupboard taken to the vestibule of the old hall of the *Comédie Française*, Cour des Suisses, in the Palace of the Tuileries, where he left it."—Documents preserved in the Record Office of the Court of Orléans. Bimbenet. *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 50.

anyone leaving the palace. And the poor man, overwhelmed by his responsibility, swore solemnly that the royal family could not have fled, except by the help of sorcery or trickery. As the trickery was undeniable, the crowd hooted and hissed and showed much exasperation. Then suddenly there was revived the evergreen tradition of an underground passage beneath the Tuileries, extending to Vincennes or Marly, and the mob eagerly fed their growing irritation on this and other insane inventions, which had only to be suggested to be believed. There were those who declared that *Veto* was there with his family, run to earth in some hole. By half past eight a hundred thousand persons, burning with curiosity, were massed before the walls of the Tuileries. The tocsin was ringing, drums were beating, the shops were closed.[1] Then the fever reached a crisis, and in a moment the crowd streamed into the palace by all the gates, uttering cries of indignation against the truants and of vengeance against Lafayette, who had allowed them to escape.[2]

Lafayette, after the King's *coucher*, had returned to his house in the Rue de Bourbon (now de Lille), at the corner of the Rue de Courty. He was still asleep when, at eight o'clock in the morning, his friend d'André, the deputy from Aix, dashed into his room and imparted the news. The commandant-general sprang from his bed and dressed himself at lightning speed. Every door in the house was already open, while one officer after another rushed in for instructions, and intrusive visitors came in to see how the general was bearing the blow. He appeared presently, full of energy, but without any sign of dismay, and in an instant had passed out into the street—that Rue de Bourbon usually so deserted, almost rural, in fact, with its line of garden walls and lofty doorways, but full this morning of feverish agitation, and shouts, and hustling crowds. The sight of Lafayette created an uproar. The people groaned, and clenched their fists, and cried "Traitor!" He went on foot, without any escort but his young artillery officer Romeuf;

[1] Letter from Madame Roland to Bancal, Tuesday, June 21, 1791.

[2] "It is almost impossible that Lafayette should not have connived."—Letter from Madame Roland of the same date.

and as he walked quickly along, his face pale and expressionless, his plastron tightly fastened across his chest, his big épaulets hanging low in the American fashion, he towered above the crowd in his great cockaded two-cornered hat, which was placed crosswise on the fair hair that he wore unpowdered, with puffs frizzed out over the ears. The crowd followed him in a howling, threatening procession. At the corner of the Rue du Bac, while the shops were being closed, another stream was bearing along the tall, thin, stooping figure of Bailly, the Mayor, who, wrapped in a black overcoat crossed diagonally by a tricoloured ribbon, was looking very gloomy. He was on his way to the general, and the two men, in spite of the uproar, entered into conversation, Bailly as though nearly overcome with anxiety, but Lafayette with the bearing of a soldier, dignified and almost gay. They were joined by Beauharnais, the President of the Assembly, who was also hurrying to find the commandant-general; and the three, hustled by the crowd, hastened across the Pont Royal, turned to the right by the quay, and entered the Carrousel by the Marigny gateway.[1]

The square was like a tempestuous sea. On the roofs were bodies of guards; at the windows of the hovels in the court and of the façade, at the edges of the gutters, on the chimneys, on the vanes, everywhere, there were heads, bare arms, red faces, white fichus, overcoats, waving hats, gay petticoats, and light uniforms—a teeming chaos, from which there arose an inarticulate sound which changed suddenly into an uproar as Lafayette appeared on the scene. A path opened for him, and the general, precise and unbending, passed through the menacing, insulting, scoffing crowd, and was quickly surrounded by the officers who had remained in the Princes' Court, helplessly waiting for orders. At the guard-house poor Gouvion was still in a state of wild excitement, still swearing that he had not left his post and that the royal family had not passed him. Others were overcome by the invasion of the palace. "What was to be done? How could the crowd be held back? How far would their anger carry them?" And even the calmest

[1] Thierry, in the article *Écuries du Roi*, I.

grew alarmed at the sight of this effervescing, intoxicated city of Paris, crazy at finding herself for the first time without a master. There was no method of summoning the National Assembly, which was only convoked for nine o'clock, and Beauharnais became uneasy. What would the mob do until then? What leader would they elect? Who would get the mastery over them and trade on their folly? The mournful Bailly was silent. "Do you think," inquired Lafayette, "that the arrest of the King and his family is necessary for the good of the public?" "Undoubtedly, but by what right can he be arrested? Where is the authority? Who will give the order?"[1] "Oh, well, I will take the responsibility upon myself," said the general, smiling; and he proceeded to dictate, without hesitation or revision, to Romeuf, who wrote on a sheet of paper with the printed heading OFFICE OF THE GENERAL STAFF: "*The King having been removed by the enemies of the Revolution, the bearer is instructed to impart the fact to all good citizens, who are commanded in the name of their endangered country to take him out of their hands and to bring him back to the keeping of the National Assembly. The latter is about to assemble, but in the meantime I take upon myself all the responsibility of this order. Paris, June* 21, 1791."[2] Some voices being raised in dissatisfaction because the Queen and Dauphin were not mentioned, the general carelessly scribbled, "*This order extends to all the royal family.*"

This audacious and light-hearted assumption of the reins of government, this little note dictated on the spur of the moment, enjoining upon a whole nation to chase their King, this *coup d'État* so calmly carried out, had the immediate effect of comforting the people greatly, so much did they feel the need of being led and of having some one to obey.

But who was to take the order? Anyone who volunteered. Instantly the paper passed from hand to hand, while five, ten, twenty copies were made, given to the general to sign, and entrusted to the improvised couriers. M. Bayon, com-

[1] *Mémoires du Marquis de Lafayette.*

[2] *Procès-verbal de ce qui s'est passé à Châlons.* Châlons-sur-Marne, L. L. Leroy, 1876.

mandant of the seventh battalion, would hurry off by the Valenciennes road; another officer, M. Bodan, would take the road to Metz; M. Lolivrette and M. Rollot would start for Compiègne; the engineer Rochet for Troyes; Lieut. Dufay for Lille; M. Lafontaine would go to Lyons;[1] while M. de Romeuf, the general's aide-de-camp, would speed post-haste along the Laon and Mons road, for it was in that direction, it was universally agreed, that the King would aim at the frontier, which was there about fifty leagues from Paris. Many others, tempted by a spirit of adventure, contemplated the idea of chasing the fugitives. They ran to the posting-house in the Rue Contrescarpe-Dauphine; they requisitioned every obtainable horse; they lost much time in kissing, in farewells, in claspings of the hand; and they lost more in attempting to leave Paris, for at the first alarm the barriers had been closed, and no one could pass without thoroughly trustworthy references. For the last hour distrust had been the order of the day. Of all those who started thus, bubbling over with enthusiasm, very few went farther than the suburbs. They were seen at Senlis,[2] at Étampes, Beauvais, Provins, and Maintenon. The greater number of them did not even go so far.

At the Tuileries, however, the wandering crowd were masters of the situation; though as they penetrated further into that mysterious palace that had hitherto been closed to them they gradually quieted down. This may have been due either to the intensity of their curiosity or to an instinct of veneration, for the Parisians, whatever they may say, are naturally respectful, and in their innermost hearts there still lurked a feeling of adoration for royalty and of filial love for the Bourbons. They had known each other for so long! And the glory of the Bourbons was so closely allied to the history of the people! The prevailing sentiment was one of

[1] List of the horses furnished by order of the Mayor and M. Lafayette on the 21st July (*sic*), 1791.—*National Archives*, M. 664.

[2] The news of the flight was brought to Senlis at about half past twelve by two men dressed in the national uniform, riding hired horses, and carrying orders "to run after the King." At Valenciennes the King's departure was known of at four o'clock on the morning of the 22nd, the news being brought by a courier from the *Quatre Nations* section of the Paris Commune.

sullen vexation with this King of theirs, a good fellow after all, who, it was true, had suffered some discomfort at their hands, but had made a mistake, too, in getting angry and deserting his people for so slight a cause. What if he were not coming back! They were filled with consternation and despair at the thought that they were deprived of him, perhaps for ever. They walked through the salons of his palace, then, somewhat pensively. "Now then, Messieurs," they said, "let us be content with looking at everything there is to be seen here; but not one of us must touch anything, or he will most certainly be hanged!"[1]

The little Dauphin's room was examined with interest and emotion. In the Queen's apartments the people showed rather more animosity and made more noise: they opened the cupboards and felt the bedding. On a great state bed, between four gilded pillars, a cherry seller sat enthroned with her basket on the eider-down quilt. "To-day it is the Nation's turn to be comfortable!" she cried. "Now then! Cherries, fine cherries, at six *sols* a pound!" A girl whose hair someone wished to adorn with one of the Queen's scarfs tore it from her head, saying that "that cap would pollute her." The servants of the palace were forced to strip off their livery, which they did with a good grace. The crowd laughed a great deal, peered everywhere, insisted on seeing everything, while all the time they continued to repeat the injunction, "Do not touch anything!" Some youths took a portrait of the King from the wall and hung it on the door to serve as a sign in token of *apartments to let.* The arrival of the postman with the letters, his bewilderment, and his uncertainty as to the proper hands in which to place his mails, were the occasion of the keenest delight. "Gone, without leaving an address!" cried the bystanders. The letters were sealed and handed over to the Committee of Inquiries.[2]

Little by little, order was restored, and the doors were closed. The National Guard, of their own initiative, organised a system of surveillance; and moreover, the street had a

[1] Statement of Pierre Hubert, page-of-the-palace.

[2] *Révolutions de Paris*, June 1791, and *Partie de Plaisir avortée à Varennes.* Statements of Pierre Hubert, Desclaux, &c.; Lescure, *Correspondance Secrète, &c.—National Archives*, D. XXIXb.

strong attraction for the sight-seers, who were anxious for news. Lafayette had just left the Carrousel. His horse had been brought there by his orders, and he, coquetting with the risks, had ridden without escort to the Guildhall. In the Place de Grève the mob was more irritable. There were several outbreaks, and some men in the crowd having recognised the Duc d'Aumont, who commanded the sixth division of the National Guard—the division which had been on duty at the Tuileries on the previous day—pointed him out to the populace as one of the accomplices in the King's flight. He was mauled, stripped, and trampled under foot, and was being dragged towards the river when Lafayette with a word saved his life![1]

For the commandant-general was still King of Paris. The mere sight of him produced a sort of fascination, which can only be explained by the emotional and mental immaturity of the populace, which was, so to speak, an infant in all matters political. No sooner did he appear than the crowd rushed to meet him, gathering round and clinging to him, greeting him with cheers,[2] eager even to touch and caress his white horse, who in imitation of his master accepted all this adulation with inexhaustible patience and open satisfaction. This white horse, who played his part in history, was, according to one faction—the idealists—a marvellous beast, who had cost 1500 louis and was the hero of miraculous tales.[3] According to the other faction—the cynics—he was a certain knock-kneed, worn-out pack-horse called *L'Engageant*, for which there was no longer any use in the pages' riding school, because the beginners would not ride him. This divergence of opinion is an example of the difficulties that one encounters in seeking for truth in history. Be it as it may, Lafayette's horse was famous. The Parisians had christened him Jean

[1] "M. d'Aumont, who was thought to have been entrusted with the guarding of the King that night, received some ill-usage. He owed his rescue to the courage of the grenadiers of the Saint Médéric battalion, of whom several were wounded."—*Partie de Plaisir avortée.* "The Duc d'Aumont, who was maltreated by the crowd, was nearly stripped and was terribly beaten."—*Le Babillard*, No. 18, June 22, 1791.

[2] *Aventures de guerre au temps de la République et du Consulat*, by A. Moreau de Jonnès, 1858.

[3] *Mémoires du Général Baron Thiébault.*

Leblanc, and professed for him a kind of superstitious reverence.[1]

When the commandant-general dismounted at the steps of the Guildhall there arose from the crowd a prolonged murmur of reproach. Many people did not attempt to hide their tears, and, as at the Tuileries, there was a perpetual wail of "The King is gone!" The people of Paris felt themselves orphaned. A happy idea occurred to Lafayette. "My children," he said, "the Civil List of Louis XVI amounted to twenty-five millions: every Frenchman to-day is richer by a *livre* of income." This was quite enough—since the mob is only an overgrown child—to occupy every mind for the moment and distract it from its grief. Some voices cried "Bravo!" others added "No more King!" and the general, being in the vein for oratory, ended: "You call this flight a misfortune! And what name would you give to a counter-revolution that should rob you of your liberty?"[2] This time he was applauded. His tall, slender, courtly figure stood out clearly against the steps of the Guildhall; he made a sweeping bow like an actor, and taking Bailly's arm, entered the building.

At that moment ten o'clock struck. The clock bell of the Guildhall was still vibrating when the report of a gun burst upon the air, and was answered by a shout from the crowd. Two minutes later it was followed by a second report, and a third. This signal of distress emanated from the battery on the *terre plein* of the Pont Neuf, while every bell tolled mournfully, and through every street the drummers paraded by the roadside, beating the call to arms. Such was the dangerous prescription administered to the Parisians, a method of treatment fatal to this impressionable people, on whom guns, drums, and tocsins have always produced so unfailing an effect that these exciting stimulants have long been excluded from their regimen. But in those days scenic effect was more considered than now, and during the beginnings of the Revolution it seemed as though Paris took a pride in acting her part well in the dramatic performance

[1] *Souvenirs d'un page de la Cour de Louis XVI*, by Félix, Comte de France d'Hézecques, Baron de Mailly.

[2] *Mémoires du Marquis de Lafayette.*

on which the eyes of the world were fixed. There were those, indeed, who went too far that day. At the call of the drum there streamed from the Hospital du Gros-Caillou an absurd procession of invalids, who, infected by the general excitement, had broken away from their attendants, and having armed themselves as best they could, marched along in their hospital overcoats.

The cause of all this emotion was not so much the King's desertion as the fixed belief that a "Saint Bartholomew's Day for patriots" was imminent. Everyone was convinced that the departure of the royal family would be the signal for terrible reprisals. "We believed ourselves to be under the knife," wrote Madame Roland.[1] It was the universal opinion that this disappearance of the Executive was but the prologue, and that the tragedy was about to begin. It was incredible to those concerned that such an extreme measure should be anything but the first step in a vast counter-revolutionary scheme. When they saw that nothing happened, and that this Hegira was merely an escapade, they breathed more freely; but throughout this morning of the 21st the town was feeling like a man condemned to death, standing with bandaged eyes, and expecting every minute to hear the order to fire.

In their longing for protection, the people crowded round the Guildhall, where the sight of the white horse with a man at his head comforted them a little. Then they moved towards the Riding School of the Tuileries, where the National Assembly was sitting, and stared at the long walls of the low building, which was nearly buried under a confusion of annexes—huts, wooden sheds, and tents of striped canvas, white and blue. Here the worthy people tried to reassure themselves by saying to each other, though not very confidently, "Our King is in there; Louis XVI may go where he chooses." And here too a few fanatical voices cried "No more King! *Vive l'Assemblée!*" But these met with no response.

The Assembly itself was in a terrible state of embarrassment. From a constitutional point of view the situation was impossible.

[1] Letter to Bancal, June 23, 1791.

The sitting began as usual at nine o'clock. Along each side of the hall, which had a low ceiling and was disproportionately long, were two rows of benches draped with green cloth and padded at the back, and meeting at the ends to form an amphitheatre. In the middle of one side were the platform and the bar, opposite to which stood the arm-chair and table of the President, overlooking a huge centre-table round which the secretaries sat in a semicircle. About half-way up the walls there was a narrow gallery, the front of which was hung with green cloth: these were the reserved seats. At the ends, behind each of the amphitheatres, there arose, like two cages for wild beasts, the deep rows of benches for the public, towering tier above tier. In the centre stretched the narrow riding-track, its length broken only by two great piers of faïence, which acted as stoves in winter and as ventilators in the spring.

Beauharnais the President was absent. The excited deputies drew together in groups, very few of them going to their places. The public seats were overflowing with a throng of people, who, contrary to their custom, were dumb from intensity of curiosity.

As Beauharnais did not appear, the ex-President Dauchy took his place. He was a farmer of Beauvais, who had formerly been a postillion, and his manners were brusque and his oratory little to boast of. He bowed towards the secretaries' table, and one of them, rising, began to read the minutes of the previous day. Upon this a murmur arose.

"What a time to read the minutes!" cried a deputy from the threshold of the hall.

Dauchy turned round, became obviously uneasy, and left the chair. Beauharnais was hastily crossing the hall. He appeared preoccupied, but he stepped up to his table with dignity and perfect calmness, and said, standing—

"Gentlemen, I have an important piece of news to communicate to you."

Absolute silence fell upon the Assembly. The thirteen hundred deputies, the two thousand spectators, held their breath.

"It is my duty to inform the Assembly," continued

Beauharnais, "that at eight o'clock this morning—an hour before I started for this place—M. *le Maire* came to my house and announced to me some news that cannot fail to fill the Assembly with consternation, the news of the King's departure with some of the royal family."

There was not a word, not a sound, not a movement.

"I imagine," the President went on gravely, "that the National Assembly, at such an unforeseen and important juncture, will consider it desirable, for the tranquillity of the kingdom and the maintenance of the constitution, to give the most prompt orders that every part of the kingdom shall be informed as quickly as possible of this alarming news."[1]

Beauharnais sat down, and silence followed. No one opened his mouth; the Assembly had apparently fallen into a state of lethargy. It seemed as though, in that gathering of men who had been holding forth ceaselessly for twenty-five months, not one had a word left to say, as though the fount of speech had suddenly run dry. At this critical moment the figure of Deputy Regnaud suddenly appeared on the platform. He was a lawyer from Saint-Jean-d'Angély, renowned for his imperturbable self-confidence—a man twenty-nine years of age, with the broad shoulders and general build of a Hercules. It was his boast, in his own social circle, that he could lift a man on the calf of his leg, and hold a woman upright on his hand with his arm outstretched. No one less stimulating than this lively individual could have shaken the Assembly out of its torpor. He began by extolling the nerve, coolness, and concord of his colleagues; then he proposed that couriers should be instantly despatched to every department, "with an order to arrest any person who was leaving the kingdom." Camus, with an air of great seriousness and severity, supported the motion, and a debate on the point ensued.

Beauharnais informed his colleagues that Lafayette had already sent couriers by every road. This was surprising. Lafayette "was not a legal authority." Who had the right of giving such an order? The executive power alone. But

[1] *Parliamentary Archives.* National Assembly, sitting of the 21st June, 1791.

this power was flying from the country. And the Assembly proceeded to follow this vicious circle without any possibility of coming to a conclusion.

Nevertheless, they voted for the despatch of the couriers. But what form of decree should they carry with them, and what should it prescribe? To seize everyone who was leaving the kingdom? And supposing they met the King on the road, were they to wait until they reached the frontier before they laid hands on him? Regnaud originated the idea of adding "a special provision to the effect that all the individuals in the party of the royal family were to be arrested wherever they might be." Camus declared that he considered the word *arrest* objectionable, and thereby aroused a murmur of disapproval.

"Ill-disposed persons must not be able to say," he urged, "that the National Assembly ordered the King to be 'arrested,' but merely that he should be 'prevented from continuing his journey and made to return to his ordinary place of abode.'"

This distinction was generally approved. The secretaries scribbled hastily, and handed a sheet of paper to the President, who read the rough draft with great deliberation amid profound silence:—

"The National Assembly decrees that the Minister of the Interior shall instantly despatch couriers into every department, with orders to arrest, or to have arrested, any person whatever who shall be leaving the kingdom . . . and that in the case of the said couriers overtaking any members of the royal family, the public officials, national guards, or troops of the line shall hold themselves bound to take all measures necessary to stop the consequences of the said departure by preventing the journey from being continued, and to report everything to the National Assembly."

This was greeted with murmurs of approval mingled with cheers, and the decree, being put to the vote, was adopted unanimously. But who was to carry it? The Ministers were not there, being forbidden by the regulations to enter the hall. And moreover, since they were appointed by the King, it was possible that they would refuse to obey the

Assembly. A decree was passed then admitting them to the bar, followed by a second decree which declared the sitting to be *en permanence.* The wildest disorder reigned in the hall, while the deputies quibbled and interrupted each other and lost time in preposterous suggestions. It was Delavigne who originated the idea of "firing the heaviest gun in Paris at intervals of ten minutes, in order that the news of the event that had just occurred might be spread from place to place by the noise of the reports." The motion was much admired; but one Martineau remarked, not without justice, that "the reports of the guns would, it was true, create anxiety throughout the kingdom, but would not inform the people of the cause for alarm. Couriers," he added, "would be more useful than guns." This was obvious; but no couriers were to be had without the co-operation of the Minister, and no one dared to guarantee his approval. It was necessary to wait, but the Assembly became irritable under the sense of its helplessness.

"At all events let us do something, gentlemen!" they cried.

The people without were battering on the walls of the Riding School. It had just been decreed that the doors were to be kept closed, and no deputation admitted,[1] and the crowd was growing impatient. The sound of the constant uproar reached the hall, where the legislators were leaving their seats and carrying on a cross-fire of conversation.

"Be calm, gentlemen, be calm!" enjoined the President.

The deputies crowded round the secretaries' table, and some of them seated themselves at their ease on the steps of the platform, mopping their faces, for the heat was great. Others defied the regulations by gathering round the stoves, attracted by the fresh air that ventilated through them. From time to time the ushers passed along the hall, sprinkling the floor with vinegar as a hygienic precaution.[2]

[1] *Camus.*—I request that the National Assembly will give orders to the chief authorities and to those in command of the police force to employ a sufficient guard to prevent any person other than the deputies from entering the hall (cheers). The Assembly adopted this motion.—*Parliamentary Archives*, sitting of June 21, 1791.

[2] Armand Brette, *Histoire des édifices où ont siégé les assemblées parlementaires de la Révolution.* Vol. I.: *Le Manège des Tuileries.*

Then, amid the turmoil, Beauharnais rose to his feet. He had just learnt that one of Lafayette's aides-de-camp, who had been stopped by the mob, was demanding to be heard by the Assembly, and a moment later a young officer appeared at the bar. It was Romeuf.

He appeared somewhat agitated, and related how, "being entrusted with an order from the commandant-general, he left the Hôtel Lafayette with his comrade Curmer, with the intention of reaching the barrier and hurrying along the road to Mons, when, on arriving at the Pont Louis XVI (now *de la Concorde*), he was stopped by the workmen who were employed in completing it, thrown from his horse, and greatly maltreated. He succeeded in escaping by the help of some worthy men who warded off the blows, but the mob dragged him to the guard-house of Les Feuillants, and he was very uneasy about his companion, who had disappeared in the tumult."

The Assembly was not so much interested in the fate of young Curmer as in the substance of Lafayette's order. They demanded to see it. Romeuf presented the paper to the President, who read it aloud to the sound of unanimous applause; after which Beauharnais, seizing the opportunity, suggested that this courier who had fallen from heaven should be entrusted with a copy of the Assembly's decree. Cries of "Yes! Yes!" arose from every bench. Romeuf entreated "that steps should be taken to secure the safety of his comrade, who was perhaps at that moment in great need of help." But the attention of the deputies was otherwise engaged. They congratulated him, encouraged him, applauded him; then they presented him with a copy of the decree for the pursuit of the King, and, in order that he might cross Paris and leave the town without further mishap, the Assembly gave him the protection of two of its members as far as the barrier. La Tour Maubourg and Biauzat left the hall with him, preceded by an usher.

The crowd gave way, and he passed out. His guardians did not return to the Assembly until they had placed him in the hands of the officer of the guard at the Barrier of St. Denis. Thence Romeuf was intending to go to Le Bourget

and to follow the Laon and Soissons[1] road, when a herb-seller from Claye, whose cart was standing before the barrier building, began to relate how, as he was travelling in the direction of Paris on the previous night, he had met upon the road, at about three o'clock in the morning, "a berline with six horses and a cabriolet with three." This rather vague clue would no doubt have been insufficient to turn Romeuf from the road he intended to follow, had it not been that as he was in the act of mounting his horse a man arrived from the Guildhall with the news that a Municipal Commission then sitting *en permanence* at the Tuileries had just heard the evidence of a young postillion named Pierre Lebas, who was in the employ of his uncle, a job-master in the Rue des Champs Élysées.

Pierre Lebas had related that two men, unknown to him, having ordered, at two o'clock on the 20th, three horses to go to Claye in the evening, he had led the horses at about nine o'clock to the Rue Millet, stopping at the first gateway as he came in by the Faubourg St. Honoré. They were there harnessed to a cabriolet, which he was ordered to take to the

[1] In the *Relation du départ de Louis XVI*, by M. le Duc de Choiseul, this important incident is inaccurately described. The author says: "M. de Romeuf had been sent along the Valenciennes road by M. de Lafayette to track the King. When he arrived at the barrier that opens on the road to Le Bourget, he was seized by the crowd who had gathered there, and his life was threatened. He persuaded them to take him before the Assembly, that they might satisfy themselves of the fact of his mission. At the moment of their arrival there a herb-seller from Claye was making a deposition at the President's table, to the effect that between two and three in the morning he had met a berline with six horses and a cabriolet with three, between Bondy and Claye. Having heard this deposition, the President himself changed M. de Romeuf's route, put into his hands the decree of the Assembly ordering the arrest . . . and despatched him along the road to Châlons."—*Choiseul*, p. 102.

Now it was not at the barrier, as Weber said (*Mémoires*) and Choiseul repeated, that Romeuf was stopped by the crowd, but, as we have seen, at the Pont Louis XVI (now *de la Concorde*). It was before the Assembly that the herb-seller made his statement; he was not even heard by the Permanent Committee of the municipality. Moreover, this herb-seller could not have met the berline and the cabriolet between Claye and Bondy, since it was only at Claye that the cabriolet met the berline, which travelled from Bondy to Claye alone.

We mention the herb-seller's evidence, however, because all Paris was talking about it in the course of that day; but strictly speaking the first indication of the road taken by the fugitives was given, as we shall see, by the postillion Pierre Lebas, before the Permanent Committee at the Tuileries.

other side of the Pont Royal, where he had to wait a long time. At midnight an individual had come up to him, accompanied by two ladies, of whom one was very stout and the other tall, slight, and pretty. Only the ladies entered the cabriolet, which then drove off. At the posting-house at Claye, which they reached at about two o'clock, the ladies had alighted. Another carriage was following, they said, and they wished to wait for it. It was a quarter past three before the arrival of this second carriage—a great berline, entirely closed, drawn by six horses and preceded by two mounted couriers.

Pierre Lebas had seen no more. "No words had been exchanged," and the two ladies had again taken their places, without a word, in the cabriolet, which had started off, after the change of horses, with the berline. He, for his part, had received "a louis for the horses, and six francs as a *pourboire*."[1]

This detailed account had attracted all the more attention that the address mentioned by Lebas was that of the Comte de Fersen,[2] whose relations with the Court were known to every one. Trusting to these rumours, which were more or less altered as they passed from mouth to mouth, Romeuf decided to change his route. He rode to the barrier of St. Martin, where he learnt that an hour earlier one of his fellow-couriers, Bayon, had passed through on his way to Metz,[3] carrying the order of Lafayette.

Nevertheless Romeuf hurried on. It was nearly one o'clock in the afternoon when he started off at full speed along the road by which, eleven hours before, the heavy berline of the royal family had travelled.

[1] The municipal officers who repaired to the Tuileries, in accordance with the resolution of the Department of Paris, secured the first evidence, which was to this effect (here follows the statement of Lebas, which we quote almost *verbatim*).—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36, *dossier* 344.

[2] The Rue Millet had a short time before been officially named the Rue Matignon.

[3] Bayon had also found much difficulty in crossing Paris and reaching the barrier. Having left the Tuileries at ten o'clock, he only left Paris at midday.—*Rapport exact et sommaire de l'arrestation du roi*, by Bayon, commandant of the seventh battalion of the second division.

CHAPTER V

THE PURSUIT

THENCEFORWARD Romeuf was able to track the course of the berline at every stage. The news of the flight had spread from Paris with incredible speed, and all along the route Bayon had left a trail of excitement behind him as he passed. Even at Bondy, the first stopping place, where an inquiry was set on foot, the resulting information was very strange.

The sergeant of the national mounted police of Pantin had on the previous day, the 20th June, received orders to mobilise the whole of his company, and then to proceed along the road to join the companies from Bondy, La Villette, and Ménilmontant. This little body of troops—thirty or forty horsemen at least—had mustered at the house of a wine merchant called Desbille, at the spot known as "La Petite Villette." At eleven o'clock these four companies of police had gone to the quarries of Montfaucon to institute a search there, which had, however, no result.

While returning to Pantin with his men at about two o'clock in the morning, Sergeant Vautier had passed on the high-road "a four-horsed carriage with an awning on the top of it, going at a smart trot towards Meaux."[1]

Now that it was known almost with certainty that the King had taken the road to Meaux, it appeared evident that this carriage was his, and that Sergeant Vautier had missed a fine opportunity of distinguishing himself. And it was indeed the royal berline, drawn by Fersen's four horses and driven by that Swedish nobleman himself, disguised as

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

a coachman. As for the mobilisation of the mounted police, opinions were divided. Some suggested that they had been despatched to Montfaucon on the pretext of searching the quarries in order to clear the road, and to find a safe field for their vigilance; others declared, on the contrary, that the constabulary had been armed in order that it might be useful in case of need.

This was the opinion of a certain Fournier, a labourer of d'Andilly, who in crossing the main road to Pantin in the night "had seen three mounted policemen ranged along the road, from the turning to Les Vertues to the door of M. Tiphaine, the Mayor of Pantin." One of the horsemen perceiving him, "came towards him sword in hand, and asked him, Where are you going?" For all answer Fournier had turned into the road to the Prés-Saint-Gervais; but at that moment there passed along the road "a great berline full of people,"[1] and Fournier saw one of the travellers put his head out of the window and call to the driver, "who was dressed in an overcoat," "*Une roue sur terre*—one wheel on the ground! We shall make less noise and be less shaken!"[2] Fournier was instinctively alarmed, "and moved away to return to his work."

The travellers, then, had left traces behind them everywhere as they passed. Even at Claye it was said that they had been detained at Meaux since the morning. Others said they had been stopped at Senlis; but the first of these rumours was so circumstantial that Romeuf, as he approached Claye, expected to find the fugitives there. He arrived there some time before four o'clock, having covered eleven leagues in two hours and a half. At the posting-house in the Place Saint-Étienne there was much excitement, but no sign that the royal family had been there other than the announcement of the flight made by Bayon as he passed at about half past

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

[2] This was the phrase hallowed by custom. "In the neighbourhood of Paris the roads are paved, and as the postillions drive very quickly, the effect on carriages and chaises is very unpleasant. This is why, if weather permits, it is usual to tell the postillions to *go on the ground*, that is to say, on the unpaved paths that run beside the high-roads."—*Guide du voyageur en Europe*, by Reichard Weimar, 1805. Vol. II., p. 157. France: means of travelling.

two. He had requisitioned three horses in the name of the commandant-general, one for himself and one for the groom who was to bring back the animals;[1] and he had immediately gone on his way towards Châlons, thus keeping more than an hour's advantage over Romeuf. Petit, the postmaster,[2] now

GREASE-POT FROM THE OLD POSTING-HOUSE AT MEAUX.
(From M. Henri Lavedan's Collection).

quite well remembered having furnished eleven horses at about five in the morning for a large berline from Paris,

[1] Bayon requisitioned horses as he went along. We gather this from a "List of horses furnished for the town of Paris on the occasion of the King's departure by me, Petit, postmaster at Meaux, in June, 1791."

"21st. Three horses for the commandant of the battalion of St. Germain-des-Prés, bearer of an order from M. de Lafayette and from the town, on his way to Saint-Jean. Post-horses 1/2, 5 livres, 12 sols, 6 deniers; fee for one postillion, per stage, 1 livre, 10 sols."

Similar lists were furnished by the postmaster of Claye. There, as at Meaux, one may trace the course of Bayon's journey by the unpaid bills. Of Romeuf's journey no trace remains, doubtless because he paid for the horses at each stage, like ordinary travellers.

[2] According to a tradition that seems reliable, Petit, the postmaster of Meaux, hearing that his colleague Drouet had stopped the King, was filled with such despair at the thought that he had missed this opportunity of covering himself with glory that he hanged himself a few days later.

accompanied by a cabriolet and two couriers, but the change of horses had not been marked by anything abnormal. Later on, about two hours before Bayon had passed, a horseman who seeemed in a great hurry had arrived, riding a superb animal called L'Argentin, and followed by a groom. He had left his horse and servant at Meaux, and had continued his journey alone on a post-horse. Romeuf, while his fresh mount was being saddled, asked to speak to the groom. The man was called Duchesne, was attached to the royal stables, and was going to Metz with the horses of M. de Briges, one of the King's equerries and a major in the Hainaut Rifles. Duchesne had started from Paris early in the morning with this gentleman, who had left him at Meaux and had gone on alone.

Romeuf, now almost certain that he was on the right track, sprang into his saddle and rode off, while the onlookers—for a crowd had gathered round the posting-house—continued to catechise Duchesne, who, though he swore that he knew no more than he had said, was shut up in the local prison for fear of accidents.[1]

[1] The story of M. de Briges is very obscure, and no doubt it would be very interesting to throw light upon it. Joseph Christophe de Malbec de Montjouc, Comte de Briges, seems to have been intimately concerned with all the events of the Revolution. Unfortunately, one can nowhere find any but the vaguest traces of him. In a letter from Marie Antoinette to Mercy, dated February 3rd, 1791, and published by M. Feuillet de Conches (*Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette et Madame Elizabeth*, Plon, 1864-73), we find this allusion: "Our flight will take place by night. . . . M. de Briges will act as our courier." We find him again on the 10th August, 1792, and on the following days, at the Feuillants and the Temple, among the most intimate and devoted servants of the royal family (Beauchesne, *Louis XVII*, 13th edition. Vol. I., p. 233.) He was shot at Vannes on the 3rd August, 1795, after the Quiberon Expedition. He was thirty-four years old. (*Expédition des Emigrés à Quiberon*, by Charles Robert, of the Oratory of Rennes.) This is what the Comte de Séze says of the journey of the Comte de Briges in his *Histoire de l'événement de Varennes*. It must be remembered that de Séze obtained information on many details from those who had been attached to the Court. "No doubt the Marquis de Briges had started off to follow the King. It is even known what horse he rode; L'Argentin had been given to him, one of the fleetest horses in the chief stables, but it is also remembered that M. de Briges only heard of the King's departure late in the morning, and it was not till midday of the 21st that he urgently demanded a horse." This information had been furnished to de Séze by M. de la Ravine, who had been one of Louis XVI's outriders.

We have not been able to verify the hour at which de Briges left Paris, but he had started before Bayon, who only overtook him, as we shall see, at Chaintrix, although de Briges had left L'Argentin at Meaux, and had

At the posting-house of La Ferté, which he reached after five o'clock, Romeuf was again able to trace the respective journeys of the berline and the Comte de Briges, followed after the lapse of an hour by Bayon, who had changed horses there before four o'clock, having apparently increased his advantage over Romeuf. The latter stayed only to obtain a fresh horse, and hurried on his way. At Vieux-Maisons he found the same clues. A postillion named François Picard related that, having been at the posting-house of Montmirail between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, he had been present when the horses of the berline were changed, and had recognised the King. Picard was on the point of going to Paris to make a deposition.[1] There was a rumour, he added, that the royal carriage had lost a great deal of time at Étoges, six leagues beyond Montmirail, and that perhaps it was there even now. Romeuf, pressing on with all possible speed, passed through Montmirail soon after six o'clock, and at a quarter to seven was at Fromentières, thus keeping up his pace of five leagues an hour. At half past seven he dashed down the Étoges hill, and learnt at the posting-house that Bayon had obtained a fresh mount there before five o'clock, having therefore gained upon Romeuf to the extent of two hours and a half. There was, however, nothing fresh to be learnt here with regard to the fugitives: the berline had changed horses at half past one, and had continued its journey without incident.

The heat was oppressive. The sky had been dull since the morning, and it was only shortly before seven o'clock that

continued his journey on an ordinary post-horse. Now, as Bayon crossed the barrier at midday, according to his own statement, it follows that de Briges must have started earlier than de Séze records. Moreover, save the words of Marie Antoinette quoted above, there is nothing to prove that de Briges was in the secret of the King's flight. He cannot have started off upon the Metz road until ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, after having heard, in the same way as everyone else, of the departure of the royal family. We may add that some chroniclers have declared that de Briges did not die at Quiberon, and have given him a leading part to play in the adventures of one of the individuals who claimed the name and personality of the Dauphin, Louis XVI's son. The assertion of the survival of the Comte de Briges seems to us to be founded on no evidence.

[1] He made it, accordingly, on the 22nd June, at half-past four in the morning, before the members of the Permanent Committee at the Guild-hall.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37.

the sun, still high in the heavens, broke through the clouds. Romeuf was still riding: four leagues farther on was Chaintrix, the next posting-house he reached it at a quarter past eight.

. . . . . .

It was there, as we have seen, that the fugitives, exhausted with fatigue, had admitted their identity to the postmaster Jean de Lagny and his daughters. Had the latter allowed no hint of this alarming secret to leak out? Had the staff of the stables—ostlers, postillions, stable-boys—spread no rumour of the affair? It seems impossible. Be that as it may, the royal family had been gone from the posting-house of Chaintrix for more than an hour when there arrived from Étoges that Comte de Briges who had attracted attention on his way through Meaux. He wore the uniform of the dragoons. He asked for a horse to take him to Châlons, and as the posting-house was also the inn,[1] he prepared to dine. In the dining-room there was another traveller—a man named Théveny, a chemist from Châlons.

De Briges was finishing his meal at about a quarter to six when another horseman appeared before the door and dismounted. This man, who was Bayon, appeared overcome with fatigue, and asked for news of the berline that he was pursuing. Jean de Lagny described the carriage and those who travelled in it, but, fearing that he might be blamed for not having stopped them, he did not mention that he had recognised them. Bayon's narrative is very precise on certain points, but also very succinct. By following his journey, stage by stage, one may deduce that in less than six hours he had ridden thirty-five leagues and changed horses ten times. It is easy to believe, then, that when he arrived at Chaintrix he was absolutely exhausted, and only too glad to find some excuse for going no farther. The excuse he found was de Briges. Bayon, on seeing this soldier, whom he had reason to regard as *suspect* and had tracked, stage by stage, from Bondy, produced the credentials of his mission, and made them his authority for forbidding the postmaster to supply the officer

[1] *Itinéraire complet du royaume de France. Route de Paris à Châlons-sur-Marne.*

with the means of continuing his journey. Then, being quite certain from the description that the berline that had preceded him was indeed the royal carriage, he despatched a courier with orders to stop it. Jean de Lagny's son, a lad of thirteen, undertook this mission, sprang upon his fleetest horse, and rode off at full speed towards Châlons.[1]

Bayon, feeling every confidence that in the hands of this messenger the chase would lose nothing in speed, returned to catechise de Briges. That officer declined to give his name and rank, but did not hesitate to admit that, being in the King's service, and having heard in Paris at about nine o'clock in the morning of his Majesty's departure, he had set off to join him, or at all events to return to Metz, where his own regiment was quartered. And further, being driven to prove that he had not been in the secret of the King's flight, he accounted for his time during the last three days. "On Saturday the 18th he had ridden with the King, and on Sunday morning had gone to pay his respects to him." On Monday he had left Paris at seven in the morning and had spent the whole day at Saint-Germain, "whence he returned to Auteuil in the evening, going home only at midnight, without having put his foot inside the Tuileries."[2] Bayon, who was gaining a breathing-space by this inquiry, prolonged it as much as possible. And moreover, it won for him another notable advantage, for the imaginary and useless duty that he had undertaken in detaining this prisoner made it necessary for him to continue his journey in a carriage. This whole farce, the search for a vehicle and the interrogatory of the prisoner, to which no doubt the business of supper was added, furnished a pretext for a well-earned respite which lasted for two hours.[3] It was therefore a quarter to eight when Bayon, somewhat recovered, stepped into the chaise which the post-

[1] "I have no hesitation in believing that I am on the King's track, but M. de Briges is on my hands. . . . I am sending a courier on before me at full speed, with orders to stop those two carriages, which I described exactly as the postmaster had just described them to me. It is his son whom I have entrusted with this mission."—Bayon's Narrative.

[2] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 36.

[3] "M. Bayon had been detained for two hours by the business of arresting M. de Briges. . . ."—Romeuf's verbal report to the National Assembly, *Parliamentary Archives*, 1st series, XXVII-478.

master had succeeded in procuring for him.[1] He took with him not only de Briges, but also the chemist Théveny, who desired nothing better than an opportunity of returning to Châlons.

Half an hour later Romeuf arrived at Chaintrix, and he too informed himself of all that had taken place there. Having now recovered from Bayon the two hours that the latter had lost, and deeming it therefore possible to overtake him, Romeuf did not linger at Chaintrix, but merely obtained a fresh horse and sped as fast as it could carry him along the road.

We say "overtake" rather than "outstrip," because it was only reluctantly and as a martyr to military discipline that Romeuf had undertaken this mission that he was carrying out with so much apparent zeal and, if he is to be believed, with so much secret repugnance. He posted at full speed and gave himself not a moment of rest because it was his duty, but he earnestly hoped that he would not succeed. Intensely loyal, and living almost constantly in the Tuileries, where he was tied by his duty, he had more than once, by his tact and general bearing, attracted the attention of Marie Antoinette; and, like many of those who saw the Queen in private life, he was devoted to her with a sort of chivalrous homage, though pitiless circumstances obliged him on this occasion to act towards her as an enemy. Thus, while Bayon was struggling to reach the royal family with the object of detaining them, Romeuf on the other hand was trying to catch Bayon with the object of hindering him in the pursuit. This is one of the most peculiar aspects of this amazing chase.[2]

[1] Bayon's Narrative.

[2] "I must not omit to say that during that painful night, when we were expecting death at any moment, and had no secrets from one another, the true and honourable sentiments of that brave young man (Romeuf) were revealed to us; his distress at the mission that he was entrusted with against his will, his scheme of delaying his arrival if he had not met M. Bayon on the road, and his willingness, if that officer had not put obstacles in his way, to help us in putting off the King's return. . . . It was impossible, in the face of what he said, to harbour the least doubt of his real attachment to the King and Queen; the bare thought of being suspected by her of having voluntarily accepted this fatal mission filled him with despair."—Choiseul's Narrative.

"M. de Romeuf appeared to be greatly distressed. His behaviour when he was with us, and his conversation after that fatal moment, gave me

The berline had entered Châlons before half-past four in the afternoon, having been driven from Chaintrix by Gabriel Vallet, who, on arriving at the posting-house in the Rue Saint-Jacques, had certainly not abstained from revealing the rank of the travellers to Viet, the postmaster. Père Viet, assiduous and anxious to please, had so successfully hastened the business of changing horses that the carriage had driven off ten minutes later. In spite of the excitement among the staring idlers round the posting-house, a type of excitement so unmistakable that the royal family saw "they were perfectly well recognised,"[1] Viet had not betrayed his knowledge. So at least one is obliged to believe. But two hours later Jean de Lagny's son, Bayon's emissary from Chaintrix, arrived at his door with information that could not be ignored—the official notice of the King's flight, and the order to detain the suspected berline or to give chase at full speed if it had gone on. It is not known how Viet received this communication. He never alluded to the visit of de Lagny's son. This is the mysterious moment, and possibly the decisive moment, of the pursuit. All that we know for certain is that immediately on the

reason to think that he had been drawn on by his travelling companion, that he was fulfilling this mission with repugnance, and that he would have wished to find that the royal family had gone too far to be overtaken."—Damas' Narrative.

Jean Louis Romeuf came of an excellent *bourgeois* family in the Haute-Loire. He was born at La Voûte on the 26th September, 1766; was an aide-de-camp in the Parisian National Guard, September 1st, 1789; a captain in the 12th Dragoons, September 15th, 1791. Being a prisoner of war (with Lafayette) and afterwards on active service in Egypt, and blockaded in Malta in 1798, he only returned to France in 1799. He was a major in 1800, became aide-de-damp to General Mathieu Dumas, was brigadier-general in 1811, chief of the staff of the 1st Corps of the Grand Army on the 5th February, 1812, and was killed at Moscow. He was created a Baron of the Empire August 15th, 1809. His name is inscribed on the *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile*.

Romeuf was chivalrous to the end of his days. In 1811 he was on the point of contracting a rich marriage with a young lady at Vienna called Charlotte de Traunvisser; the Emperor and the Minister for War were to sign the marriage contract, when he asked leave to take part in the Russian campaign. "There would seem to me," he wrote to the Minister, almost as though he had a presentiment, "a want of consideration in binding this young lady to my lot till I have escaped from the hazards of this war." He did not escape, and died unmarried. Napoleon, by a decree actually signed in Moscow, transferred the title of Baron with the income attached to it to the eldest of Romeuf's nephews, then aged fifteen.—Archives of the War Office.

[1] Madame Royale's Narrative.

arrival of young de Lagny at the posting-house at Châlons, a courier was despatched from that town, in accordance with Bayon's instructions, to spread the news of the King's flight. This courier must have reached Pont-de-Somme-Vesle at half-past seven and Sainte-Ménehould at nine, almost at the same time as the berline. Is it possible that Viet dared to take it upon himself to confiscate the order?[1] To say that he did so would be too bold, but a mathematical calculation is forced upon us. Bayon, who had been travelling since midday at the rate of six leagues an hour, must inevitably—he himself or his substitutes travelling at the same pace[2]—have overtaken the royal carriage at nine o'clock at the end of fifty leagues, seeing that the latter left Paris ten hours before him, but was barely covering three leagues an hour. Now *fifty leagues* is the distance to Sainte-Ménehould, and it was at Sainte-Ménehould at *nine o'clock* that Drouet, who did not say a word on seeing the travellers, Drouet—so unsuspicious a little time before that he did not even demand their passport, although he had a right to insist on examining it—stormed, and swore that "it was the King," and that no time must be lost in ringing the tocsin and beating the call to arms. This alone proves that the sudden inspiration which he declared, later on, had seized him on seeing the King's profile beneath the blind was merely empty bragging on his part. The truth is, that an hour after the passing of the berline the news that left Châlons at about seven o'clock became known at Sainte-Ménehould in a normal way, immediately after the arrival of Bayon's messenger. Who, then, brought it? It is not known for certain, but there can be no doubt in the face of the unanimity of evidence. Bayon says: "I sent a courier on before me, and he was the first to take the news to Sainte-

[1] There can be no doubt, moreover, that if de Lagny's son, on arriving at Châlons as Bayon's delegate from Chaintrix, had gone to the municipal officers instead of to the posting-house, the former would have at once despatched a courier to spread the news farther.

[2] It is important to remember that between Paris and Chaintrix Bayon had travelled at the rate of a league in ten minutes, or six leagues an hour. It is probable that his substitute, de Lagny's son, kept up the same pace, and that therefore, leaving Chaintrix a quarter of an hour after Bayon's arrival, that is to say, at half past five at latest, he was easily able to travel the five leagues to Châlons in one hour.

Ménehould and to *arouse the patriotic zeal of Drouet.*"[1] Romeuf declares: "The postmaster of Châlons gave notice to the postmaster at Sainte-Ménehould."[2] George, the deputy and Mayor of Varennes, goes further: "Drouet embroidered his tale very much, though in so serious an affair it was not easy."[3] Drouet himself confessed later "that it was the postmaster[4] of Châlons who had come to tell him."[5] This elucidation, of course, changes none of the facts, but it throws a peculiar light on the somewhat dubious figure of Drouet, who wrung fame for himself out of this adventure, while another man, caring little for such a form of renown, was glad to be relieved of the responsibility.

. . . . . .

The fact that the royal family had passed through the town, then, although known to Viet by five o'clock and confirmed at half past six, was only laid officially before the municipality of Châlons when Bayon arrived, four hours later. Those, however, who had been standing by when the horses of the berline were changed had by no means hidden their suspicions. The Mayor himself, M. Chorez, informed, it is said, by "a man in the town," and at first resolved to be silent, but afterwards, "alarmed by the situation," had decided to summon the corporation.

It was nine o'clock and nearly dark when the chaise containing Bayon, with the chemist Théveny and the prisoner de Briges, crossed the bridges, followed the Rue de Marne as far as the square, and drew up before the imposing entrance of the town hall. Bayon was received by armed national guards, to whom he introduced himself; and then, leaving de Briges in their hands, he went up to the council-room, where the municipal officers were assembled. He immediately produced his instructions, and at the same moment the tocsin

[1] The Sieur Bayon's petition to the National Assembly.

[2] *Parliamentary Archives.* Sitting of June 24th, 1791. The postmaster of Châlons did not warn Drouet in person, since Viet only arrived at Sainte-Ménehould at midnight, at the moment when Drouet was stopping the royal berline at Varennes.

[3] *National Archives,* D. XXIXb, 37.

[4] We repeat: it may have been *some one from the posting-house*, but it was not the postmaster himself.

[5] *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, II., p. 94.

began to ring from the church of St. Alpin. While the townspeople gathered in the streets the corporation decided to despatch an express messenger instantly along the Sainte-Ménehould road, with an authorised copy of Bayon's warrant, for the latter declined to go farther without a rest of some hours. A messenger summoned Viet from the posting-house. What had he seen? What had occurred when the horses were changed? The postmaster, to save himself from questions of a too definite nature, exhibited the greatest zeal. He offered to carry the news himself to Sainte-Ménehould, and was loudly applauded. A copy was quickly made of the document dictated by Lafayette. Bayon certified below that, "being too much fatigued to have any hope of overtaking the fugitives, he remitted his message to the bearer." The chemist Théveny bore witness in two lines[1] to the reality of the mission and to the part—a modest one—that he had played in it. The Mayor signed it, Roze the attorney countersigned it, and Viet, placing the precious paper safely in his pocket, left the town hall amid the shouts of the crowd, ran to his own house, sprang upon a horse, and dashed in his turn along the road to Sainte-Ménehould. It was half past nine.

After he had gone the corporation continued to sit *en permanence*, while nearly the whole population of Châlons gathered in the Place de Ville and the surrounding streets. As far as the end of the Rue Saint-Jacques there was a perpetual stream of people passing to and fro between the town hall and the posting-house, seeking for news. As it was drawing near ten o' clock a clamour arose: a horseman escorted by a postillion forced his way through the crowd. "Room for the emissary of the Assembly!" For this was Romeuf arriving from Paris, which he had left at one o' clock. He was followed by two other couriers—two of those who in the morning had taken possession in the Carrousel of copies of Lafayette's order, and had started off at random. The records give the name of one of these men: Berthe Gibert.

[1] Two rather obscure lines, thus expressed: "I certify that I have seen the credentials of M. Bayon, and I undertook to accompany the person that we have brought here. Signed: Théveny, chemist, residing at Châlons."

The other was certainly Roché, a sapper in the National Guard, whose course we are able to trace at certain stages of the road.[1]

Romeuf was taken before the Council, but the moment that the order had been read he expressed a desire to proceed on his journey. Bayon, though he felt that the prize in this race was being snatched from him, and that thenceforward he would play but an inferior *rôle* beside the emissary of the Assembly, would not own himself beaten. He begged and was granted the honour of accompanying Romeuf, who for his part was extremely anxious to calm the zeal of his partner, and was silently hoping that something might interfere with the accomplishment of his mission. A cabriolet was brought, and amid the cheers of the crowd the two men stepped into it, while a passage was cleared for them by the National Guard. It was after ten o'clock when their carriage passed the gate of Saint-Jacques and rolled swiftly away on the road to Metz. This road, which was level and almost bare of villages throughout the ten leagues that they had to cover, presented its usual deserted and quiet appearance; and except at the two isolated posting-houses of Pont-de-Somme-Vesle and d'Orbéval, where the news had been spread by the successive couriers as they passed, no one dreamt that the cabriolet that rolled past with its lanterns shining in the moonless darkness was bearing with it the fate of the monarchy. For indeed these two men must have been filled with overpowering emotion as they drove headlong towards a tragedy—inevitable, if as yet undefined—in which the plot was concerned with the fate of the world and the final catastrophe was to be decided by themselves. Towards midnight a great glare of light appeared in the distance, like a colossal conflagration, casting over a section of the dark sky a lurid glow, against which the clusters of trees by the roadside were outlined gloomily. They passed a circular space on the road, surrounded by elms, where several roads met; then they descended a hill, and suddenly heard a cry of "Halt!"

[1] "June 21st, two horses supplied by Petit, postmaster at Meaux, to a sapper from Paris, bearing an order from M. Lafayette."

"Two horses supplied to M. Roché, sapper from Saint-Lazare, bearing orders both going and returning, by Frémin, postmaster at Bondy."

The carriage was surrounded with torches and armed men: this was Sainte-Ménehould.

The town had been in a state of fever since the passing of the berline. All the inhabitants of Sainte-Ménehould, swarming in the Place Royale in front of the town hall, had anxiously watched Drouet starting off to pursue the King, on a road that they had some reason to believe was "overrun in every direction with cavalry." One hour, two hours, had passed without news. Four men went off on horseback to reconnoitre, but the sentries at the Porte des Bois took them for dragoons: a volley of musketry rang out; one man fell dead, another was wounded; whereupon screams and clamour, brawling and confusion followed, and the whole town was seized with panic. The *bourgeois* became absolutely distracted, and rushed to their houses "to shut themselves up"; but the more resolute sons of the people barred the way, and forced the *bourgeois* to remain in the square, saying "that there was safety only in numbers, and that everyone must share the danger, if there were any."[1] The tocsin rang continuously.[2] An order was given to every housewife to bake bread to supply the needs of the defenders of the town; at the cry "Illuminations!" every window was lit up with candles and pots of tallow:[3] in front of the town hall a great bonfire was lighted by way of illumination; and thus this neurotic populace—alarmed or excited by the smallest incident—spent the hours that rolled by without a word of news. Nothing happened until midnight, and meantime the place was in a ferment of excitement, expectation, extravagant tales, and contradictory disclosures. From the neighbouring villages there poured in a continuous stream of peasants, who announced that a large body of cavalry was moving about the country, and had been seen at Neuville-au-Pont, Auve, and Somme-Bionne. As it was not known that these detachments, observed in so many directions, consisted really of about fifty men, always the same, retiring from Pont-de-Somme-Vesle towards the forest

[1] Burette, *Histoire de Sainte-Ménehould.*

[2] G. Fischbach, *La Fuite de Louis XVI d'après les archives de Strasbourg.*

[3] *Ibid.*

of Argonne, it was imagined that the whole army of de Bouillé was investing the town with a view to sacking it.[1] At the two gates of the Bois and the Faubourg Fleurion the men of the town were acting as sentinels. The placid borough of Sainte-Ménehould had transformed itself at a moment's notice into a garrison town, and when Viet arrived here from Châlons he might have been approaching the drawbridge of a fortified city, with its "Who goes there?" and its "Advance one and give the countersign!"—challenges that could not be dispensed with, of course, so near midnight. He was taken to the town hall, where he communicated to the Council, sitting *en permanence*, the order given to him by Bayon, which was read aloud by the Mayor, Dupin. A discussion followed. Who would face the risk of continuing the pursuit? Drouet and Guillaume had not returned as it was, and were probably killed or taken prisoner by the horsemen who were no doubt swarming in the forest. Action of some kind, however, was imperative. But what could be done? While the corporation was hesitating, an uproar arose in the square, and there appeared, slowly making its way through the crowd in the yellow glare of the illuminations, the dark form of a cabriolet. Instantly the reassuring news was spread abroad that it contained the emissaries of the National Assembly.

Romeuf and Bayon had arrived. They presented themselves before the Municipal Council, produced their credentials, demanded to have their passport endorsed, and expressed a desire to go on their way at once.[2] While eager patriots hurried to the posting-house to fetch fresh horses, the two 'Parisians" were obtaining all the available information with regard to the progress of the berline, and were much surprised at the lack of news. Soon the crowd saw them reappear in the square of light formed by the doorway of the town hall. Cries arose of "*Vive la nation!*" "*Vive l'Assemblée!*" They saluted the crowd and entered their carriage, which immediately went off at a rapid trot along the dark road that approaches Clermont through the depths of the forest.

[1] Official Reports of the Municipality of Sainte-Ménehould. [2] *Ibid.*

THE PURSUIT

The road that had been described as bristling with dangers, that fatal road on which Drouet and Guillaume had disappeared, was absolutely quiet and deserted as the cabriolet in which Romeuf and Bayon sat expecting the worst slowly climbed the hills of Argonne. At half past two in the morning they passed the village of Les Islettes as it lay peacefully sleeping. It was the hour when in this country of wood and water the distant sky grows pink between the slopes of the hills, while the wreathing mists trail through the still shadowy valley of Biesme. At three o'clock the cabriolet stopped before the posting-house of Clermont[1] in the faint light of dawn.

Instantly there gathered round it a group of men—half tipsy dragoons, interested *bourgeois*, anxious peasants—all greatly excited. A man came up to the door of the carriage and introduced himself to the travellers as a member of the local Directory, whereupon Romeuf at once stated his name and the object of his mission, and asked for information. Clermont, it appeared, had not been asleep. On the previous evening, immediately on the departure of the berline—which had aroused all the more suspicion that half a squadron of dragoons had been posted at Clermont to wait for it—the municipality had insisted on the disarmament of the soldiers. In spite of a lively resistance on the part of their commanding officer, Colonel de Damas, the troop had laid down their arms, and de Damas had disappeared with some non-commissioned officers. The local authorities had lost no time in despatching a mounted policeman[2] to Varennes, to warn the municipality of the approach of the carriage that had left so much excitement behind it. Now, this mounted policeman had just returned at full speed to Clermont[3] with the news that the people of Varennes had stopped the berline and detained the travellers as prisoners. "Who are they?" "It is not known: doubtless they are personages *of the highest consequence.*"

[1] Extract from the minutes of the Directory of the district of Clermont. —*Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, 480.

[2] His name was Leniau.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37-386.

[3] He had performed the journey, there and back, in less than an hour and a half. He only missed arriving at Varennes before Drouet by a quarter of an hour.—*Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 481.

"Prisoners! Where is Varennes?" "Three good leagues away, on the cross-road to Stenay." Romeuf asks breathlessly for a relay of horses, and they are brought out hastily. But here, galloping at headlong speed and shouting to his horse, there comes a rider. He springs to the ground; his horse is dragged to the stable and falls in utter exhaustion upon the straw.[1] The man can hardly speak; he looks like a madman, but is nevertheless recognised for Mangin, the Varennes surgeon. He tells his tale haltingly, struggling for breath. "The King, the Queen, and the little Dauphin are at Varennes. The populace is guarding them, but the hussars—the army of de Bouillé, the Royal Germans—are there, quite close, to take them away. They are all going to kill each other. Everyone must hasten to the spot. As for him, he is on his way to Paris, to the National Assembly, to beg for help, to ask for orders." And he is in the saddle and away, disappearing along the road to Châlons. This is really bewildering; the King, the Queen—at Varennes! It was they, then, who passed through here yesterday evening. The people shout and scream to each other, and snatch up their weapons, while the drum beats, and Romeuf's carriage, supplied with horses in the midst of all the commotion, drives off to this town of Varennes, whose name, unknown but yesterday, is destined to be for ever famous, a familiar word on all the lips of France.

The cabriolet of the emissaries of the Assembly, leaving the Verdun road on the right, rolled on its way between the undulating meadows. In the soft light of early morning, as far as the eye could see, on every road, by every path, were hurrying streams of peasants, all flowing towards the same point of the horizon, as though there were some irresistible magnet in that direction drawing them all to itself. In the villages, at Neuvilly, at Boureuilles, not a man was left: on the thresholds of the open doors the women gathered, and gazed across the landscape with stupefied eyes and heads all turned in one direction; while from the distance, from that

[1] "I do not know if my poor horse is alive or not: I only took three-quarters of an hour to reach Clermont: when I arrived there he fell down upon the straw."—Letter from Mangin to the Municipality of Varennes. See Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*, Appendix, p. 331.

far-away region that seemed so fascinating, there arose continuously a sonorous sound, composed of the tocsins of all the hamlets, of strident drums beating the alarm, and of hoarse, indistinguishable noises.

The carriage overtook group after group, all walking their best, while Romeuf, whose dismay was now complete, stared at them gloomily, and Bayon rejoiced. They had passed Petit Boureuilles, and now the road was swarming with men carrying scythes, billhooks, and pitchforks—national guards who wore no uniform but blouses, and bore no arms but the tools of their daily work. Suddenly there was a cry of "Halt!" The cabriolet stopped, for the road was blocked by pieces of wood.[1] To right and left were low houses, and behind the barricade was a crowd. This was Varennes. Romeuf and Bayon alighted, and were challenged by the officers of the National Guard. Then the barricade of wood was pushed aside, the crowd cried "*Vive l'Assemblée!*" and the two Parisians were quickly pushed through the mob into an old building with a blackened façade that stood by the roadside. It was the town hall. Upstairs they found all the local authorities,[2] who appeared much harassed: the general council of the commune, the members of the Tribunal, the magistrate and registrar, the captain, quartermaster, and ensign of the National Guard. All these men had been arguing since the recognition of the imprisoned King in the Maison Sauce, without coming to any understanding. Were the fugitives to be allowed to continue their journey towards the frontier? Should they be taken back to Châlons? The army of de Bouillé was advancing, and the scouts had already appeared above the vineyards of Chépy. Varennes contained at that moment ten thousand

[1] "I observed the movements of the national guards, who . . . were making a rampart of trees to block the roads with."—Choiseul's Narrative.

"This barricade was placed at the spot where the road forks as it leaves Varennes, going towards the wood to the right, and towards Clermont to the left."—*Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, et Varennes*, by the Abbé Gabriel.

[2] "We went to explain to the municipality the object of our journey."—Romeuf's Report to the Assembly, *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 478.

men, who had gathered there during the night from all parts of the country. To keep the King was to expose the town to an attack which would probably result in terrible disaster. The appearance of the Parisians on the scene, then, was an unspeakable relief to the humble *bourgeois* of Varennes, who were crushed by their alarming responsibility. Romeuf's credentials were examined in a moment, and it was decided to inform the King at once of "the desire of the whole of France." This task was coveted by no one, but time was passing, and it must be carried out. A kind of procession was formed, and, descending the steps of the town hall, marched down the sloping street that crosses the town from end to end.[1]

Between the double line of national guards—a line much broken by the crowd, and, in spite of all efforts, waving in zigzags from the upper end of the town to the house that sheltered the royal family—marched the *procureur-syndic* Sauce, his face drawn and pale, his eyes staring and almost wild, his whole air that of a man dazed and stupefied. Behind him walked Romeuf and Bayon, in the smart uniform of the Parisian Guard: blue tunic, with dark red plastron, and silver fringe upon the shoulders; both of them, however, covered with dust. Romeuf was grave and sad; Bayon much excited and talking incessantly, his face flushed, his dress disordered, his collar gaping.[2] After them, grouped together without regard for precedence, came the municipal officers Pultier, Person, Florentin, Judge Destez, Cadet the commanding officer of the artillery, Hannonet the magistrate, Guilbert, Bourlois, and Coquillard, members of the council of the commune, and others. Every head was uncovered, every heart was shaken with acute agitation, every nerve was unstrung with emotion. These sensations were common to them all; one may see the traces of them in all the Narratives.

Half-way down the hill they skirted the church of St. Pierre and St. Gengoult on the right, and passed under

[1] Official Report of the Municipality of Varennes.

[2] "The fatigue and excitement of the journey had increased the grimness of his naturally sombre face; his coat was loose at the neck; his appearance and speech betrayed the most violent agitation."—Choiseul's Narrative.

the schoolhouse, a long building that stood at right angles to the church and cut the street in two. The covered passage that led through it was called the Archway, and served as a shelter on market-days for travelling tinkers. It was at the mouth of this arcade that the royal carriage had been stopped. Just beyond it, on the right, was the inn of the *Bras d'Or*, to which the travellers had at first been taken, and facing it, drawn up by the wall of a cemetery in the narrow winding Rue de l'Horloge, the berline lay stranded, with its pole on the ground and its great dome of luggage towering on the roof.[1] A little farther down, on the left, was Sauce's grocery shop, which had been the shelter of the royal family since midnight. Before the door was a confused and huddled throng; among this unwieldy crowd were a few hussars on their exhausted horses; on the threshold of the house towards which all heads were turned two dragoons stood on guard. The wooden frontage was narrow; on the ground-floor two windows acted as a shop-front, exhibiting packets of candles and pots of brown sugar; the door was horizontally divided into two parts, the lower serving as a barrier; on the first story there were two more windows, with closed sashes.[2] It was half past six in the morning, and the sun, already high in the sky, gave promise of a hot day.

Sauce was the first to enter, guiding Romeuf and Bayon through the shop, which was as full of people as the street below—of peasants, friends or relations of the Sauce family, or neighbours who had run in "to help." The staircase

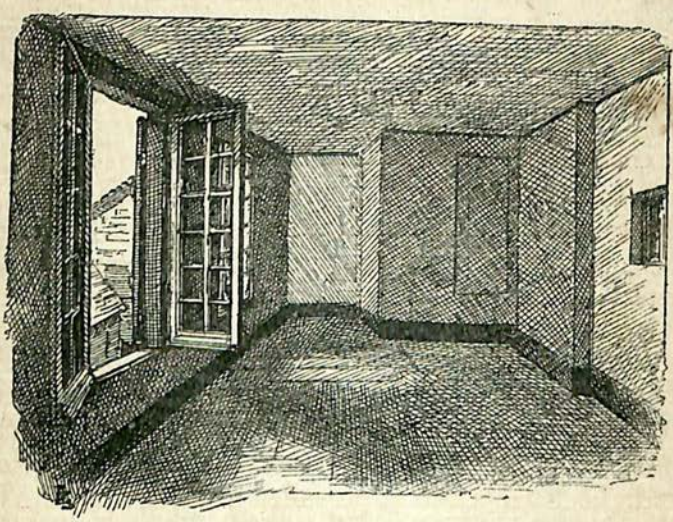
[1] "As I passed I recognised the berline standing in a somewhat narrow street, whither it had been taken."—Choiseul's Narrative.

[2] "Sauce's house consists, says a certain document, of a simple building facing the street, comprising a shop, a kitchen, and a cellar below, rooms on the first story, and attics above, roofed with tiles. The first story was reached from the ground-floor by a dark winding staircase of wood, with a thick rope, worn and dirty, by way of a handrail. The two rooms of the first story were separated by a kind of dark passage. In 1845, the Rue de la Basse Cour being enlarged, the Maison Sauce lost its frontage: only the back of the house remains intact."—*Mémoires du Général Radet*, by A. Combier. *Pièces Justificatives*, No. 19.

"It was necessary to pass through the shop to get into the house . . . the narrow dark stairs were at the back of the shop, between the wall on the left and the door of the kitchen."—V. Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*.

Fournel and Combier came from Varennes, and knew the Maison Sauce before the alterations of 1845.

was at the back, in the left hand corner, and up these dark and narrow wooden steps the procession filed. Even in the front room of the first story the people had gathered, but these were silent as they tried, through the open door, to catch sight of the royal family, who were crowded into the narrow back room. The doorway was guarded by two peasants armed with pitchforks, Druard the blacksmith, and a labourer called Blandin.



ROOM IN SAUCE'S HOUSE WHERE THE ROYAL FAMILY SPENT THE NIGHT.

A table, on which were some bread and several glasses, stood in the middle of this room. The Dauphin and his sister were asleep on a bed, while Madame de Tourzel sat beside them, leaning her forehead upon her hands. Near her were the women-of-the-bedchamber, Madame Brunier and Madame Neuville, and before one of the windows stood the impassive figure of Madame Elizabeth. The three officers of the bodyguard who had acted as couriers were at the back of the room, in their yellow livery. The King and Queen were talking to two officers, Choiseul and Damas, who wore green tunics with crimson facings.[1] Sauce stepped timidly into the room.

[1] Regulations of 1786.

"Sire!"

Choiseul has described the scene, and we need add nothing to his story.

Romeuf, as he crossed the front room and approached the Queen, whom he saw daily at the Tuileries, paused suddenly and turned away, overcome with emotion. Bayon entered alone sturdily, though his fatigue and agitation were half choking him.

"Sire, you know—" he stammered—"all the people of Paris are at each other's throats—our wives—our children have perhaps been massacred. You will not go any farther—Sire—the interests of the State—yes, Sire, our wives, our children—"

The Queen took his hand with an imperious gesture, and pointed him to the still sleeping Dauphin and his sister.

"And I, am not I also a mother?" she said.

"Well, what is it you want?" the King asked impatiently.

"Sire, a decree of the Assembly——"

"Where is it?"

"My companion has it——"

He opened the door and disclosed Romeuf, leaning against the window of the other room and shaken with sobs. He held a paper in his hand, which he presented with bent head. The Queen recognised him.

"What, Monsieur, it is you! Ah, I should not have believed it!"

The King snatched the decree roughly from him, and read.

"There is no longer a King in France," he said.

He gave it to the Queen, who also read it, and returned it to him. Then he read it again, and absently placed it on the bed.

The Queen impulsively seized the paper and flung it on the floor.

"I will not have my children defiled," she said; and the group of municipal authorities and magistrates, who from the threshold of the room were mutely and anxiously watching this scene of downfall and defeat, burst out into a chorus of

angry murmurs, "as though she had profaned the most sacred thing in the world." Choiseul, hurrying to redeem this sacrilege, picked up the decree and placed it on the table.

The King drew Romeuf and Bayon aside and spoke to them in a low voice. Everyone else drew back, even Choiseul and Damas leaving the room, the doors of which were shut. Of this intimate conference nothing ever transpired except that Louis XVI, who had not lost all hope of the arrival of de Bouillé's troops, implored the envoys of the Assembly to allow him to gain time. "Let us at least stay here till eleven o'clock," he entreated. Romeuf gave in at once, and Bayon also; but the latter went down into the street forthwith, exciting the rioters and feigning to be uneasy. "They will not go back; Bouillé is coming, and they are waiting for him." Then from the crowd, who well knew the terrible conflict that would result from the onslaught of the *great butcher* and his uhlans, there burst an absolute clamour of indignant protest. "They must go! They must be forced to go! We will drag them by the feet to the carriage."[1] The struggle was now between the people and the King. The latter appeared at the window, hoping to soften the hearts of the crowd; but from the moving mass of heads that filled the street from the Archway to the bridge there arose one unanimous cry, "To Paris! To Paris!" And in the face of this dangerous excitement the municipal body, the magistrates, and the officers of the National Guard implored the King to yield to the universal desire. "Wait a moment," he moaned. "Is it impossible, then, to wait till eleven o'clock?" "*Sire, je ne m'y fiâmes*—I would not rely upon it," squeaked the voice of an ironical old peasant, Père Géraudel, in his

[1] "I am ready to prove that it was I alone who determined him to start, by my device of making the people shout 'He must go—we want him to go!'"—Brief Report, by Bayon.

"M. Bayon played a false part: he appeared to be touched by the King's situation, and promised to use every effort in making proper arrangements for the start. All he did, however, was to go backwards and forwards, up and down the stairs, all the time, to tell the people that the King refused to go and was inventing a thousand excuses in order to give de Bouillé time to arrive. He would then come back to the King and bemoan the uproarious demands of the people, who were insisting noisily on the King's departure."—Choiseul's Narrative.

mocking patois. The Queen was "in a terrible condition." She heroically stooped even to implore help from the grocer's wife. Madame Sauce answered, as she went to and fro in the room: "*Mon Dieu*, Madame, your position is very unfortunate, but my husband is responsible, and I do not want them to pick a quarrel with him." And she placidly busied herself with preparing the breakfast and collecting provisions for the plenishing of the lockers in the carriage, which the people had dragged to the door and made ready for the start. When the meal was on the table the King sat down and ate a little. Then he fell asleep, or pretended to do so: the stratagem won him a few moments of delay, but could not be much prolonged. He was hardly awake, however, before Madame Neuville gained another respite by being suddenly seized with an attack of nerves and collapsing upon the floor. Marie Antoinette declared she would not desert her attendant, and some men belonging to the place ran to fetch M. Lombard, the doctor, who examined the patient, gave her a soothing draught, and intimated that the case was not dangerous. The crowd in the street was becoming vociferous, for it was impatient to be obeyed, and, moreover, there was a rumour that de Bouillé's advance-guard was in the wood of Montfaucon, and the general irritation was increased tenfold by terror. "To Paris! To Paris!" In the house everyone was silent now: each looked at the other, wondering if to yield were inevitable. The King begged for a moment, for one moment only of respite, for a few minutes alone with his family. No sooner had they been left than he entreated Sauce to do him an important service; to go to the carriage, namely, and from a secret receptacle—a contrivance whose position in the carriage he described to Sauce as he gave him the keys—to abstract some papers that he wished to destroy. As Sauce hesitated the King and Queen became urgent, explaining to him all they had to fear, confiding their sufferings to him, declaring that "if they had not left Paris they would have been murdered by the Orléans party. What then was to become of them?" There were tears in the eyes of both. Sauce allowed himself to be persuaded, and having made some excuse for entering the carriage, he soon returned with the

little box. The King, having opened it, set to work hastily with the princesses and the rest of the party to tear the papers into the most minute pieces possible, which they then heaped upon a large dish and tried to burn, while Sauce stood on guard at the door. Something raised an alarm, however, and frightened the King, whereupon he flung dish and papers, whether burnt or not, through the open window into the back yard. The fragments fluttered as far as the lane of La Vérade, where they were collected by many people, though no one ever succeeded in deciphering two words that were on them.[1] It was now half past seven in the morning. The berline was at the door, and the three officers of the bodyguard were already sitting impassively on the box, exposed to the invectives of the crowd. The hussars, abandoned by their officers, were passing pitchers of wine from hand to hand, and shouting before and after every draught "*Vive la Nation!*"[2] The commandant of the National Guard of the village of Neuvilly, Bigault de Signémont, wearing his cross of St. Louis, was organising the procession at the request of the magistrates of Varennes, dispersing the crowd, placing his men, and securing a certain degree of order.

Meanwhile, in the grocer's shop, the chief feeling aroused by this struggle that had lasted since midnight was one of

[1] "The King begged to be left alone with his family, in order that he might destroy the papers that the *procureur* Sauce had gone to fetch secretly at his request from a hidden compartment in the carriage. At the very moment that the papers, having been torn into little scraps, had been heaped up and were beginning to burn on a dish, someone knocked at the door of the room, in spite of the *procureur* of the commune, who was keeping watch carefully. . . . The royal family, in their agitation, flung everything—the dish and the scraps of burnt and unburnt paper alike—through the window into the yard. Some people, either from curiosity or malice, gathered up some of the fragments of paper that were still intact, but they could not succeed in making any document out of them."—(Local tradition. *La Vérité sur la fuite de Louis XVI*, by E. A. Ancelon, p. 114.)

"Sauce, our *procureur* of the commune, came to tell me some extraordinary things. The King and Queen told him, with tears in their eyes, that if they had not left Paris they would have been murdered by the Orléans faction; they confided endless things of this kind to him, and burnt in his house an enormous mass of papers, which he is very much annoyed not to have seized, but he was not in the room at the moment, having gone out to give some orders."—Letters from Madame Destez to her mother. *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37-385.

[2] Report of M. Rémy, non-commissioned officer of dragoons.—Choiseul's Narrative. *Pièce Justificative*, No. 8.

intense weariness: no one apparently gave the signal for the start, but all felt it to be inevitable. The King, always homely rather than dignified, showed his vexation plainly as he led the way downstairs; then came the Queen, trembling, on the arm of de Choiseul; then Madame Elizabeth, with

PRÉFONTAINE'S HOUSE AND THE WAY OUT OF VARENNES BY THE CLERMONT ROAD.

an air of resignation, accompanied by Damas; last of all, Madame de Tourzel and the children. They entered the carriage; the crowd in their sudden satisfaction cried "*Vive le Roi!*" and also "*Vive la Nation!*" De Choiseul closed the door.

"Do not leave us," said the Queen to him, leaning through the window, but at that instant the berline began to move, and behind it the mob rushed forward with such a swirl

that Choiseul, Damas, and even Romeuf, who had only just mounted his horse, were overturned, rolled on the ground, and dragged along till they were lost to sight.

The narrowness of the passage under the Archway created a terrible crush: then the berline, encircled by all the municipal authorities of Varennes, with Sauce at their head, made its way up that tragic street by which it had entered the town eight hours earlier. Before the venerable town hall there was a short halt, while shouts of triumph rose from the people; then the procession moved on, marching so slowly that a dragoon opposite the Maison Préfontaine was able to see the Queen, as she sat far back in the carriage, acknowledging his salute with an air of such overwhelming suffering that he declared "he had never in his life experienced anything like his feeling at that moment."[1] He also saw the King, "making a gesture that showed the deepest grief." Another witness related to de Bouillé "the most appalling details of the condition in which he had seen the King, the Queen, and their suite, with the exception of Madame Elizabeth, whose firmness and presence of mind were sustained in a way that deserved admiration."[2] There are records, too, in sharp contrast with the prostration of the vanquished party—of the exultation, the shouts of joy, and the songs of the conquerors who were all determined to escort the berline, and were setting out light-heartedly for Paris, with no reason but their desire not to lose a single incident in the events that were intoxicating the country so madly.

There was not one of those peasants of Argonne who left their cottages that day to prolong this prodigious frolic, their coats on their shoulders, sabots on their feet, and joy in their hearts, who for one moment dreamt that that morning was for France but the beginning of adventures, or that many among them would only return to their villages disillusioned and disappointed and aged, after having trudged on all the roads of Europe, during twenty-five years of danger and agony and battle.

[1] Rémy's Narrative.
[2] *Mémoires* of Count Louis de Bouillé.

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN

As far as Boureuilles—that is to say, for the distance of half a league—the march was practically a run, so strongly did the men of Varennes feel that de Bouillé's soldiers were at their heels. Across the Aire they saw the glittering helmets of the dragoons swarming over the hill of Chépy.

Suddenly, from one end to the other of the procession that was escorting the royal carriage, there rang out a cry of terror, "Here they are!" And indeed some horsemen, with an officer at their head,[1] were descending the slope towards the river, which they were trying to cross. Some of them could be seen vainly urging their horses into the water, some seeking for a ford, some winding among the crops. If they had thought of going on to the village of Boureuilles, about a hundred yards farther, where the road crosses to the right side of the river, there would have been no obstacle between them and the "patriots," who could not then have avoided the meeting they feared so much. The latter endured half an hour of horrible apprehension; they saw the horsemen draw together, look long and earnestly at the marching peasants in the distance, and finally retire towards the main body of the troops, near a hamlet with the appropriate name of Ratantout.[2]

The berline was escorted by six thousand men,[3] of whom

[1] It was de Bouillé's son.—Second Official Report of Varennes.

[2] (*Rater*=to fail, to miscarry. *Il rate en tout*=he fails in everything. —*Trans.*)

[3] Second Report of the Muncipality of Varennes. The Report of the Directory of Clermont to the Assembly says: "The carriage was escorted

more than two hundred were mounted, with about a thousand women and children; and the trampling of so many feet raised a cloud of dust, for they walked quickly. After about an hour's march, during which they had covered more than a league and a half, the head of the column halted, having suddenly encountered, coming out of the village of Neuvilly, a squadron of dragoons, who at first sight had inspired them with panic. These were, however, not enemies, but reinforcements, being those soldiers of de Damas' detachment who had turned refractory on the previous evening at Clermont.

After having fraternised and caroused all night with the men of that town, they had chosen as their leader one of their non-commissioned officers, M. de Sournie, and they were accompanying the National Guard and the council of the district on their way from Clermont to meet the King.

Devillay,[1] the president of the district, approached the berline. Through the open window he saw Louis XVI, grey with dust and stifled by the heat, and saluted him in the name of the Directory of Clermont. The Queen and her children appeared to be ill and worn out with fatigue.[2] Devillay began a harangue "expressing the sentiments of the people of the town towards their Majesties, and the alarm occasioned by the bare idea of their departure." The King answered simply, "It was not my intention to leave France," and leaned back in the carriage. The men of Clermont fell into position next to the corporation of Varennes, and with the dragoons as a rear-guard they proceeded on their way.

At ten o'clock in the morning the procession reached the first houses of Clermont, where, the news of the King's return having spread throughout the neighbourhood, "more than six thousand men" thronged the only street of the town. The dusty berline passed through at a foot's pace, while the people, every one of whom wished to see all there was to be seen, hustled each other and cheered, and shouted "*Vive la Nation!*"

The men of Varennes received an ovation, but their

by more than six thousand men of the National Guard, and by a crowd of people of all ages and both sexes."—*Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, 482.

[1] *Parliamentary Archives*, 1st Series, XXVII, 480.

[2] *Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, etc.*, by the Abbé Gabriel.

triumph was not unmixed with consternation, for a rumour was being spread abroad that de Bouillé's soldiers had taken possession of Varennes, and that the town was in flames.

There was a short halt at the town hall. Sauce delivered over to his colleague of Clermont the passport that had been made out in the name of the Baronne de Korff, and used by the royal family, begging him to see that the document was placed in the hands of the National Assembly. As for him, he was worn out. Moreover, it was reported that Varennes was being pillaged. He had left his wife and children there; he was in a great hurry to go home.

And he was seen, solemn as always, disappearing along the road to his own town, with several members of the Varennois corporation. As they strode along, their faces were sad, for they were full of anxiety with regard to the misfortunes that awaited them in their own homes, and perhaps, at the bottom of their hearts, of fear that they had not acted for the best. They had delivered the King into the hands of the revolutionaries: this had been made plain to them by the brutal gaiety of the six thousand patriots assembled at Clermont, and by that insolent cry, "*Vive la Nation!*" with which the ears of the captives were so persistently offended.

And now the council of the district of Clermont, in organising the royal escort, eliminated from it all non-commissioned officers, as being unworthy to command free dragoons.[1] As far as Sainte-Ménehould, therefore, Signémont alone was to lead this procession of undisciplined peasants and soldiers intoxicated with insubordination. It is said that Madame Elizabeth, seeing this officer prancing about on a great horse he had succeeded in procuring, pointed to the cross of St. Louis upon his coat, and said to the King, with an expression of indignant pity, "See, *mon frère*, there is a man to whom you give bread!"[2]

[1] Letter from the directors of the Clermont district to the Directory of the department of the Marne.—*Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, etc.*, by the Abbé Gabriel, p. 311.

[2] Information collected by the Abbé Gabriel.—See *Louis XVI, le Marquis de Bouillé, etc.*, p. 306.

They started off again, still at a foot's pace. The heat was oppressive and the road was hard. At every turning, at the junction of every little path, there were some who fell out of the procession on the plea of resting in the shade, some lingerers who wandered into the wood and were seen no more. By way of compensation, new recruits were constantly arriving.[1] The roadway was lined with a double row of peasants—men, women, and children—who were drawn along and mingled with the crowd, followed it for a hundred yards or so, and then fell out, to be replaced by others. This throng—noisy, perspiring, drunken—was visible from afar, while in its midst the berline was almost hidden from sight so closely was it encircled and imprisoned. Yet there it was, its windows open, its surface grey with dust, and within it, imagined rather than seen, the King's face, red and swollen from the heat, the Queen's indignant brow, the children in a state of obvious exhaustion. These signs of humiliation only encouraged the dastardly crowd, who elbowed and jostled one another, and, clinging to the carriage door, stared over it with insolent familiarity, their mouths agape. As soon as they had gazed their fill they flung at the prisoners the only insult they knew, "*Vive la Nation!*"

It took them nearly three hours to cover three leagues, and it was only at half past twelve that the huge procession reached the farm of Vertevoie and began to descend the rapid slope by which Sainte-Ménehould is approached.

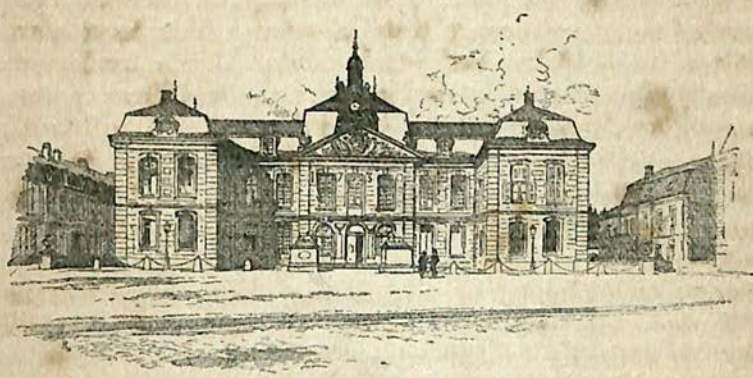
Beneath the burning sun the plain of Champagne appeared to be literally scorched. And already there arose from the valley the mighty murmuring of an over-excited mob, mingled with the rolling of drums and the ringing of bells.

The town of Sainte-Ménehould, after its night of distracting anxiety, had been in a state of ferment since the dawn. Drouet and Guillaume had reappeared[2] at four o'clock

[1] "During the return journey the dragoons as they marched were mingled with the crowd that covered the road, the fields, and the meadows: they were greeted with cries of *Vivent Messieurs les dragons!*"

[2] "It was four o'clock when the Sieurs Drouet and Guillaume, reappearing in our midst. . . ."—Extract from the Minutes of the Municipal Council of the town of Sainte-Ménehould. "Drouet and Guillaume, who were back at Sainte-Ménehould on the following day by three o'clock in the morning, announced. . . ."—Memorial proving the claims of the in-

in the morning, and had made known the course of events at Varennes : shortly afterwards Mangin had passed through on his way to Paris with the news of the arrest, followed by a succession of couriers who gave notice of the King's return. Whereupon the whole neighbourhood descended upon Sainte-Ménehould to see him. Express messengers continually arrived from Châlons seeking information, and the National Guard of that town had actually crowded themselves into four wagons and posted along the road.[1] The incident



THE TOWN HALL AT SAINTE-MÉNEHOULD.

began to assume the appearance of a gigantic pleasure party, for the housewives of Sainte-Ménehould, foreseeing a rush of visitors, had been baking bread all night, and outside the houses, by the roadside, tables were set up and spread with food. Between the Porte des Bois and the town hall fifteen thousand men [2] had ranked themselves in so compact and regular a mass that it was almost impossible to move among them.

habitants of Sainte-Ménehould upon the gratitude of the nation. Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes, Pièce Justificative*, p. 377.

[1] List of expenses entailed upon the department of the Marne by the journey of the King and the royal family.

"To the Sieurs Chanoine, Fouet, Loger, Subet, and Quillet, for the posting expenses of the expedition they made to Sainte-Ménehould at the head of the National Guard of Châlons, 58fr. 10c.

"To the Sieur Lance, for the carriage supplied by him to the officers and others who went to meet the King, 118 francs."

[2] Report of the Muncipality of Sainte-Ménehould.

At the corner of the Basse Terres road Dupin, the Mayor, and de Liège, the chief municipal officer, presented themselves at the door of the carriage as it drew up.

The King leant forward sleepily, while the Mayor delivered a discourse "on the alarm that his Majesty had caused to the nation by listening to advisers unworthy of his regard and at variance with the dictates of his heart." The royalists thought this lecture misplaced, the patriots deemed it inadequate. The King answered timidly that "his intentions had been greatly misunderstood, for he had nothing in view but the happiness of his people"; and the berline, preceded by the Mayor, went on its way to the town hall, past the posting-house, where less than twenty hours earlier it had been supplied with fresh horses. The King looked about him with interest, while the attention of the Queen, who was sitting far back on the left side of the carriage, was attracted by a certain spectator in front of the posting-house; who raised himself on tiptoe above the heads of the crowd and saluted her with a sweeping flourish of his hat. This man, who was greatly moved, was dressed simply, but was decorated with the cross of St. Louis; he wore two pistols in his belt, and carried a musket on his shoulder after the manner of a grenadier. A few steps farther on was the sign of the *Soleil d'Or*, where several disarmed dragoons were standing about the door in their stable jackets. The berline turned to the right, and stopped between the stone lions by which the entrance to the town hall is guarded.

In a large room on the ground-floor a table was laid for five, and to this the royal family was led by the Mayor.[1] The King was covered with perspiration and appeared harassed; the cloth dresses of the Queen and Madame Elizabeth were grey with dust; Madame Royale could hardly stand, and the Dauphin fell asleep upon his chair.[2] Nevertheless, they seated themselves at the table in silence, and the corporation and other principal local authorities waited respectfully upon their Majesties. The King took some

[1] Buirette, *Histoire de Sainte-Ménehould*, and Report of the Municipality.

[2] Private information.

M. DE DAMPIERRE'S CHÂTEAU AT HANS.

THE PORTE SAINTE CROIX AT CHÂLONS-SUR-MARNE, FORMERLY THE PORTE DAUPHINE.

soup in a silver bowl, which was handed to him by Faillette, the landlord of the *Soleil d'Or*.[1] The meal, indeed, was both dainty and lavish,[2] and towards the end was enlivened by a little conversation. The royal family chatted about the heat, their feelings of fatigue, the past and future course of their journey; while the King, as was always the case when he spoke naturally and without nervousness, charmed everyone by his good nature and patience. The Queen inspired more awe, but she pleased the *bourgeois*, who were mostly fathers of families, by her care for her son; for he had not been undressed for forty hours, and she feared the effect upon him of the overpowering heat of an afternoon in the berline. The Mayor placed his house at the Queen's disposal, an offer which she instantly accepted, and it was decided not to continue the journey until the early morning of the next day.

But the impatient crowd without was growing weary of waiting. The people had come to see all that was going on, and they demanded their King with vociferous cries. Louis XVI meekly allowed himself to be led upstairs, followed by Marie Antoinette with her son in her arms. The Mayor opened a window, at which the King appeared first, then the Queen and the Dauphin, their gracious action being greeted by a loud cry of "*Vive la Nation!*"

The great oblong space of the square seemed to be paved with heads. Hats were flourished, hands were waved, and every eye was turned towards the balcony, where the King stood dressed in his disguise—the brown coat and the hat laced like a servant's—greeting them with a wave of the hand and every appearance of satisfaction.

Then suddenly the burning curiosity of the crowd changed

[1] Faillette, in memory of the King's visit, had the following inscription engraved upon this bowl:—

"At Sainte-Ménehould, Louis XVI, as he was being taken back from Varennes as a prisoner, took some soup in this bowl, June 21 (*sic*), 1791." This bowl belonged in 1891 to Madame Coloson.—*Annales de l'enregistrement*, 1891. Article by M. Tausserat.

[2] List of expenses.

"To the Municipality of Sainte-Ménehould and the neighbouring municipalities, for the expenses of providing food for the royal family, their suite, and the National Guard, and of providing munitions of war, 3697 *livres*, 17 *sols*, 5 *deniers*."

to anger. A roar of indignation arose from every corner of the square, for the ostlers from the posting-house had just been seen to push the berline towards the stables, and instantly the news had spread that the King would not start till the following day. "We are betrayed! They are waiting for de Bouillé," cried the leaders of the mob, and all the townsfolk echoed, "We are betrayed! To Châlons! To Châlons!" for in imagination they already saw rushing upon their town, sword in hand and carbines loaded, all the cavalry that was thought to be swarming in the forest.

"Well, well," said the King, resigned already, "let us go!"

As he was about to go downstairs he saw, behind the gate that divided the town hall from the gaol, some prisoners looking at him. Taking from his pocket ten louis, to which the Queen added five, he begged the Mayor to distribute the money among the prisoners, and then went pensively down to the breakfast-room, where he waited, without saying another word, until the carriages were brought round.

The crowd, which seemed to be made more violent by each concession on the part of its victims, was becoming insulting —ferocious even. As the departing berline turned into the Rue de la Grande Auche a riot broke out. Signémont had yielded the command of the mob to Bayon; the Varennois—except about thirty of them, who had probably nothing to lose —had returned with all haste to their town, being anxious to learn what had taken place there; the militia of the district of Clermont and the "patriot dragoons" did not care to go farther. The escort, then, was composed of new-comers, who filled the office of warder all the more savagely that they had run no risks in the matter of the arrest—quarrymen, woodcutters from the forest, chalk-diggers from the plain, the riff-raff of Champagne, mean and miserable villagers, with shaven chins, thin lips, cunning eyes, and stunted forms, armed with hoes and old muskets.

The departure of this horde, who had been drinking since the morning, took place beneath the fierce three o'clock sun. It was no longer a procession, but a tornado; and its general appearance was such that the magistrates of Châlons, who had

posted from that town with the intention of receiving the King at the confines of the department, when they encountered this rabble pouring out of the gates of Sainte-Ménehould promptly returned as they came without leaving their carriages, or even seeing the royal berline, which was being detained at the entrance of the Grande Auche by the outbreak of a riot.

For there, by the house forming the corner of the Rue de l'Abreuvoir, was a man who, this time on horseback, was recognisable as that knight of St. Louis who had stood bristling with pistols before the posting-house at the entrance to the town, and had saluted the Queen. He was obviously much excited, and as a protest against the insulting jeers of the peasants he seized the musket that was hung upon his shoulder and presented arms. The King saw him, and returned his salute.

The rider then cut a path for himself through the crowd by a movement of his horse, and hurrying on by the short way through the Rue des Capucins, posted himself at the farther end of the bridge, at the corner of the Quai de l'Hôpital. As the carriage passed he tried to urge his horse through the crowd, who repulsed him with their cudgels; however, in the middle of the faubourg he succeeded in drawing near enough to salute the King again, at the same time crying out his name and style. Above the uproar his voice was heard announcing that he was "the Comte de Dampierre, that he had married Mlle. de Ségur, a relation of the Minister and a niece of M. d'Allonville." It is not known whether the King heard him, but the escort hooted, and tried to dismount him. Urging his horse forward, he dashed through the crowd, and, firing his musket as he went, galloped away along an embankment that crossed a certain piece of marshy land called the Pool of Rupt. Some of the peasants fired on him without hitting him, but his horse slipped on the muddy turf and he rolled into a ditch, where he was quickly found. There they shot him at close quarters as he lay, battered him with cudgel-blows, disfigured him with pickaxes; but the incident was hardly noticed amid the songs and shouts of the gay-hearted crowd. The King, however, heard the firing of the shots and made inquiries.

"It is nothing," someone answered him; "it is only a madman being killed."

But Dampierre was not dead yet. The murderers, therefore, seized him by his coat collar and dragged him, howling with pain, to the road, intending to finish their work beside the royal carriage. But being checked at a distance of fifty yards from the high-road by a narrow but deep ditch, they rolled the dying man into it and despatched him with a final charge of shot.

THE SPOT WHERE M. DAMPIERRE DIED.

At the first village, Dammartin la Planchette, the assassins were within an ace of killing each other over the business of dividing among themselves the arms and horse of their victim; and it is said that they left on his body a chain of gold and fifty louis, which were found at the time of his burial.[1]

The procession had not paused, but continued to advance slowly under the merciless sky—a deplorable rabble of exhausted men, dragging their feet after them. Three hours after leaving Sainte-Ménehould they arrived at Auve, where

[1] It is a truly astonishing thing how inaccurate even the spectators of the drama were in their recollections of certain points. Thus Madame de Tourzel places the murder of M. de Dampierre before the arrival at Sainte-Ménehould. "When the King," she said, "was passing over a road between Clermont and Sainte-Ménehould, we heard the sound of some rifle-shots, and we saw a crowd of national guards running in the meadow. The King asked what was happening. 'Nothing,' was the answer; 'it is a madman they are killing!' And we learnt shortly afterwards that it was M. de Dampierre, a nobleman of Clermont, who had roused the suspicions of the National Guard by his eagerness in trying to approach his Majesty's carriage."

the peasants standing by the roadside watched this great throng tramping past them in an uproar of shouts and obscene songs, those who were near the berline addressing scurrilous remarks to the King and Queen, who could be seen sitting there in a cloud of dust, worn out, melancholy, motionless.

Having left the village behind them, they continued to journey across the great plain. At Le Neuf Bellay, a hamlet of three houses, which they reached before Tilloy, they met, at about seven o'clock, M. Plaiet, a member of the Directory of the department of La Marne, and M. Roze, the *procureur-général-syndic* of Châlons, who saluted their Majesties respectfully. They found the royal family "in a state of dejection of which it would be impossible to form any idea." At Pont-de-Somme-Vesle there was a short halt to change horses. The escort, since the arrival of the magistrates of Châlons, had been rather less disorderly; the carriage was encircled by national guards; the Varennois who intended to travel all the way to Paris had secured vehicles at the posting-houses, and the procession now stretched out over a long distance and had the appearance of a military convoy. The laggards who formed the rear-guard were half tipsy, and when as night fell they passed below Notre Dame de l'Épine they broke the windows of the priest's house with stones.[1]

As they approached Châlons the escort was gradually swelled by those who had hurried in from the neighbouring country to satisfy their curiosity. The road was lined with horsemen, with crowded vehicles, with foot passengers, all of whom stared with amazement at this strange troop of about four or five thousand men,[2] of whom barely a quarter wore uniform. Never did any monarch yet make an entry like this into one of his "good towns."

At the junction of the Avenues of Saint Jean with the royal route, at the spot then called the Fork, a detachment of mounted police was posted. These fell in at the head of

[1] "To the *sieur curé* of l'Epine, for repairing the windows of his house, broken by the National Guard when the King passed, 39 *livres*."—List of Expenses.

[2] Official Report of what occurred at Châlons.

the procession, which then turned into the Avenues in order to avoid the circuitous way through the heart of the town. It was past eleven o'clock at night.

The National Guard of Vitry-le-François, combined with those of all the towns and villages of the district, were drawn up under the trees as far as the Porte Dauphine. Nothing was distinguishable within the berline, but on the box were the three officers of the Guard in their yellow liveries, sitting motionless, as they had sat since the morning, under a fire of mockery and abuse. As the King passed, the militia and the crowd made no sound, but the moment the Varennois appeared, in high feather, there were cries of "*Bravo! Vive Varennes! Vive la Nation!*"

At the Porte Dauphine the berline stopped. On these very stones the carriage of the young Archduchess Marie Antoinette had drawn up in 1770, when she was on her way into France to be its Queen. It was in her honour that this tall stone archway had arisen so grandly; and still by the light of the illuminations that outlined its entablatures that night could be read the inscription carved upon it twenty-one years earlier: *Perstet aeterna ut amor—May this monument endure as long as our love!*

Under the archway the municipal body harangued the King, and then, preceding the carriage as it passed between the two lines of national guards, marched on two hundred yards farther to the new Intendant's house, where apartments had been prepared.[1]

Marie Antoinette had long ago lodged in this magnificent building, when journeying from Vienna. It was one of the most sumptuous specimens of the charming French style of the eighteenth century, with a massive portico supported by columns and richly decorated with shields; high, small-paned windows, ornamented on the tympanum with a graceful garland carved in stone; and a huge court, splendidly regular,

[1] List of expenses entailed upon the department of the Marne by the King's visit.

"To Ogny's wife for preparing the rooms in the Intendant's house for the arrival of the royal family, 12 *livres*.

"To the Sieur Machet, upholsterer, the sum of 75 *livres*, for furniture supplied for the apartments of the royal family."

with its three façades all of the same architectural style, ending in an Italian balustrade. Notwithstanding the crowd, the berline contrived to enter the court. On the threshold of the reception rooms on the ground-floor, which were brightly lit up, some young girls of the place presented the Queen with baskets of flowers,[1] and respectfully offered to wait upon her; while the King, in spite of the lateness of the hour, was expected to receive official visits from the members of the departmental government, the district tribunal, and a body of officers belonging to the urban guard and the mounted police.[2] After this, at one o'clock, supper was served,[3] at which all the administrative bodies were present, seated round the table in the correct order of precedence. It was not till two o'clock that the royal family were permitted to retire upstairs, where bedrooms had been prepared for them on the first floor.

Here, for the first time since they had left the Tuileries, the fugitives found beds. Not one of them lay down, however, for the warm reception of the Châlonnais, and the undisguisedly loyal sentiments of the authorities—particularly of the Mayor Chorez, and of Roze, the *procureur* of the department[4]—had given rise to the wildest illusions. The King was on his feet all night, while the Queen and Madame Elizabeth were equally wakeful. In those huge and lofty rooms, whose windows look out upon the rich foliage of the Park of Ormesson, they held feverish consultations. Should they attempt to remain at Châlons, "surrounding themselves with a defensive army," and rallying round them, as though in an entrenched camp, all the royalists of France? The commandant-general of the mounted police was expecting the arrival of the National Guard of Rheims; and if this body of men, well armed and equipped as they were, shared the sentiments of the Châlonnais, "there might be some possibility of keeping the King, since reinforcements would

[1] *Mémoires de Madame de Tourzel.*

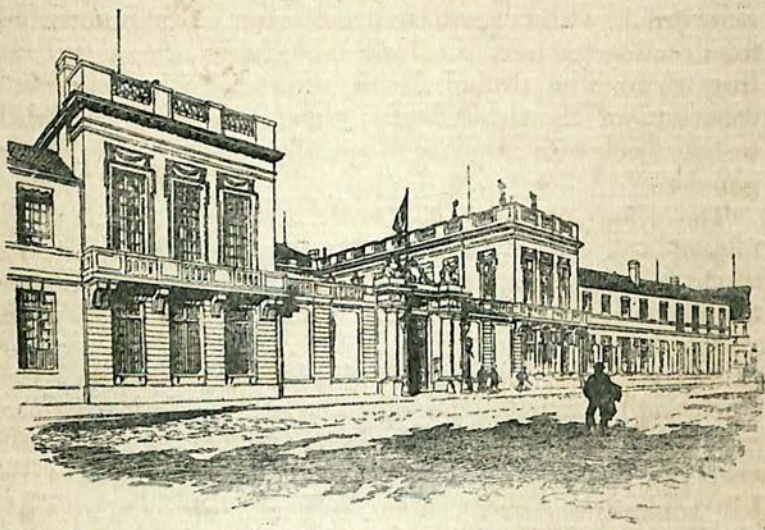
[2] Official Report of what occurred at Châlons.

[3] "To the Sieur Deuillin, caterer, for the supper for the King and the royal family, 400 *livres.*"—List of Expenses.

[4] Chorez was nearly cut to pieces that very day because of his royalist sentiments. He was obliged to fly and hide himself. Roze died on the scaffold in Paris in 1794.

constantly come in of all the true sons of France in the neighbourhood." [1]

They even considered the insane idea of turning back again to Montmédy. The National Guard of Châlons offered to serve as an escort of honour to the King, only asking, in order to make themselves into a body of cavalry, for authority to use the horses of the Bodyguard, which had been left at the depôt in Châlons ever since the disbandment of the



THE PREFECTURE, FORMERLY THE INTENDANT'S HOUSE AT CHALÔNS-SUR-MARNE.

corps. Others entreated the King to leave the town without delay, and to fly to join the army of de Bouillé. In the room where the Dauphin was sleeping—the end room at the southern corner of the façade looking towards the garden—a secret staircase was hidden in the wall, by which it was possible to leave the building without being seen by the sentinels, and take refuge among the trees of the park.[2]

[1] *Précis historique du Comte de Valory.*

[2] This staircase, which still exists, enables one to identify the room occupied by the Dauphin. Madame de Tourzel simply says: "They showed him a secret staircase in the room where Monseigneur le Dauphin slept, which it was impossible to discover unless one knew where it was."

But Louis XVI refused to fly alone; he preferred to gain time. It was therefore arranged that he should stay as long as possible at Châlons, in order that "his good men of Rheims," from whom he expected wonders, might have time to arrive.

In the early morning he lay down, but at about half past nine was awakened by the news that the "good men of Rheims" had arrived. They were a collection of "black sheep," recruited from the factories, who had marched all night, and were drunk with fatigue, heat, and wine. Being prevented from coming too near the Intendant's house, they yelled out threats from a distance, and demanded the immediate departure of the royal family, whom they had undertaken to take back with them to Rheims, to make a show for the populace.[1]

The King answered obediently that "he would dress himself and attend Divine service—for this Thursday, the 23rd, was Corpus Christi Day—and that immediately after his dinner he would start, in accordance with the desire of the people."[2]

At ten o'clock, then, he left his rooms and went to Mass. The landing outside the salons was lined with national guards and town police, who presented arms;[3] and in the chapel of the Intendant's house, on the middle story of the left wing, the Abbé Chalier, *curé* of Notre Dame, made ready to officiate.[4]

But before the introductory prayers were ended a great uproar arose in the court of the building. The good men of Rheims had succeeded in forcing their way past the

[1] "When the National Guard of Rheims arrived they expressed their intention of making the King and his family go round by Rheims on their return to Paris. At the same time disturbing rumours were disseminated, to the effect that the administrative body intended to keep the King at Châlons for the whole day, in order to facilitate his rescue or flight."—Official Report of what occurred at Châlons.

[2] Official Report of what occurred at Châlons.

[3] "To the police of the town of Châlons, for the day and night spent by them on the occasion of the King's arrest, 36 *livres*."—List of Expenses.

[4] This chapel, though disused, has not been altered: it is a little room, with the altar standing back in an alcove, which is panelled with fine Louis Quinze woodwork in white and gold.

sentinels, and were overrunning the hall and the beautiful stone staircase with the gilded iron railing that led to the chapel. They were shouting at the top of their voices that "Capet was fat enough already for what they were going to do with him," and that they would undertake "to make cockades for themselves of the bowels of Louis and Antoinette, and sashes of their skins"; while others demanded "their hearts and livers," that they might cook and eat them.[1]

The corporation of Châlons succeeded in calming these

THE OLD INTENDANT'S HOUSE AT CHALÔNS-SUR-MARNE, SEEN FROM THE PARK OF ORMESSON.

madmen, and the Mass was proceeded with; but a few moments later a great noise of broken windows[2] and of "fearful cries" spread terror throughout the building. This time the people were declaring that Capet had been made away with, that the hostile troops were approaching, and that de Bouillé was at the gates of the town. It was necessary to interrupt the service. A window was opened and the King appeared. A tremendous uproar greeted him, but with a gesture he asked for silence, and declared that "as

[1] Moustier's Narrative.

[2] "To the Sieur Mathieu, glazier, the sum of 13 *livres* for windows broken at the Intendant's house on the occasion of the King's visit."—List of Expenses.

soon as the carriages were ready he would start." Seen from the balconies, the court, with its simple, noble lines, looked like a boiling cauldron: from the archway that led under the right wing to the stables a mass of people were dragging the berline, which was knocked about, and pushed and almost carried bodily, till it came to a standstill at the entrance on the left, where the horses were quickly put in. The royal family, without taking the time to touch a morsel of the meal that the cooks had hastily prepared, hurried into the berline under the protection of some of the officers and municipal authorities of the place;[1] and at midday the royal carriage drove away from the Intendant's house into the heart of the town. A mounted guard acted as escort and cleared the way through the narrow streets that led past the town hall and out of Châlons by way of the Rue de Marne.

The terrible men of Rheims having been made to understand that it was impracticable to go round by their town, the procession followed the road to Épernay. The town-guards of Châlons and Vitry-le-François encircled the berline, and kept at a distance the thirsty and uproarious crowd that persisted in following it. As far as Matougues a certain degree of order was secured, but there an express messenger from Châlons brought the news that the town was being sacked;[2] "a frenzied multitude had invaded the town hall, run the Mayor through with pikes, and robbed the provision shops." Help was wanted instantly; the outbreak must be stopped. Right about face! In a moment the national guards were hurrying home along the road to Châlons, leaving the royal family to the tender mercies of the men of Rheims.

This was the most terrible stage of all their martyrdom. The four long hours that they spent in covering the five

[1] "The Queen and her two children, Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel, and the women of the suite were protected by the arms of the brave men who formed the guard inside the house, and who assured them (the royal family) of their loyalty and courage, promising to protect and help them at the risk of their lives.

The King, the royal family, and the suite went into the salon where their dinner had been hastily made ready, but their state of agitation made it impossible for them to eat anything."—Report of what occurred, etc.

[2] Report of what occurred at Châlons.

leagues between Matougues and Épernay were certainly among the most cruel of the whole journey. The little that is known of them is almost incredible. At Chouilly the entire village, having been warned of the King's approach, set out as one man to meet him; and a little before four o'clock they saw the berline descending the hill of La Haute Borne to the entrance of the little town, where it drew up opposite the Rue des Grès. The travellers and their conveyances were in a pitiable plight, and the peasants of Chouilly looked on in horror while the wretches who surrounded the carriages shook their fists threateningly at the prisoners and spat in the King's face. None dared protest. Louis XVI sat like a statue. The Queen and Madame Elizabeth wept with rage and indignation.[1]

It appeared certain to these people of Chouilly, as they watched the procession passing on its way, that the King and Queen would not reach Paris alive. Some of them followed as far as Épernay, where there was a delay of five hours for refreshments, or rather, as it was pompously expressed by a man of the place, for the purpose "of drinking long draughts from the cup of bitterness." The suburb of La Folie did not then exist, and the berline had only passed the first few houses of the Rue de Châlons when it drew up before the Hôtel de Rohan, where dinner had been ordered. So great was the crush in front of the inn that it nearly required a free fight to make a way for the prisoners through the crowd. Then the carriage door was opened, and they alighted under a fire of curses and gibes, a forest of extended arms and threatening pikes and uplifted hatchets, a storm of yells and insults. The National Guard of Pierry, a village near Épernay, cleared the entrance to the hotel for a moment; but no dam could stand against the fierce pressure of that crowd, which dashed into the courtyard, dragging with it in its chaotic, headlong course both the Guard and the royal family. The Dauphin, whom one of the officers of the bodyguard had lifted up above the turmoil, looked for his parents in vain and began to scream, till the officer of the Pierry Guard—the son of Cazotte—held out his arms to the crying child, who flung

[1] *Étude historique de Chouilly*, by the Abbé Barré, p. 227.

himself into them. Young Cazotte's cheeks were wet with the tears of the little prince as he carried him into the room where the Queen had taken refuge.[1] Here he was kissed and comforted by his mother, who, having torn her dress in the tumult, was trying as best she could to repair the damage. Cazotte succeeded in finding and bringing to her aid the daughter of the landlord, Mlle. Vallée, "a young person with the prettiest of faces," who with blushing cheeks and eyes full of tears mended the Queen's cloth skirt.

In an adjoining room the King was sponging his face, surrounded by municipal and other officials of the place. He was worn out with fatigue and black with dust. "This is what one gets by travelling," suggested a man of Épernay who was standing by.

A kind of conversation followed. Louis XVI repeated "that it had not been his intention to leave France, but that he could no longer remain in Paris, where his family was in danger."[2]

"Oh, but excuse me, Monsieur, you could!" said one of the bystanders.

The King looked at him and was silent.

Dinner was prepared in a large room on the ground-floor, whose two windows overlooked the courtyard, which was thronged with the howling mob. The latter, however, baffled by the calm resignation of the little party at the table, grew gradually less noisy.

"After all," said a voice, "they look very nice."

[1] The Sieur Cazotte *fils* left Pierry at the head of his well-disciplined company. As soon as they saw the prisoners coming he had the carriages surrounded; he gave his hand to Madame Elizabeth, lifted out the King's daughter, took the Dauphin on his shoulder and carried the child into the room that had been prepared; he drew up his men in the yard, brought order into the arrangements of the inn, saw that dinner was put on the table, and by means of his troops prevented the crowd from climbing up on the window-sills, so that the royal family should not be worried during their meal. He persuaded the prisoners to show themselves to the people, and by this double method he avoided discontent on one side and the importunities he might have been subjected to by the other side. They asked his name, and he told it; the Queen, who had had no peace till this moment, showed her appreciation of the way he had behaved.—Examination of Jacques Cazotte by Fouquier-Tinville, Aug. 30th, 1792, published in the *Cabinet Historique*, July–Sept., 1875.

[2] *Journal de Louis XVI et de son peuple.*

And this was the universal impression among all who had a near view of the prisoners,[1] though the greater number of the people, those who had remained outside under the archway and in the street, were happily engaged in exciting themselves and each other with silly fables, having for basis the phenomenal gluttony of the King and the Queen's shameless coquetry. And thus, when at the end of an hour the meal was over and the time had come to pass again through that infuriated crowd, the situation was not without danger. Each of the travellers in succession was conveyed to the berline encircled by a group of national guards with arms interlaced; and Madame de Tourzel, who was almost carried by young Cazotte, was deposited on her seat in a half-fainting condition. When the Queen appeared on the footpath a woman flung at her these parting words: "On you go, *ma petite;* there are plenty more that you'll be made to see!"

And indeed this was true enough, for even on the outskirts of Épernay the cruel martyrdom began again. There was no one in command of the escort but Bayon, who had not parted from "his prisoners"[2] since leaving Sainte-Ménehould; and his authority was a cipher. So also was that of M. Roze, the *procureur-général* of La Marne, who accompanied the royal family to the confines of the department; while the few persistent Varennois who had not been discouraged by the length of the journey were driving in carts at the head of the procession, and were content to take no share in the affair beyond accepting ovations and cheers. The rabble from Rheims, then, were masters of the situation, and made the most of their advantages. As they passed through Vauciennes they had seized the *curé* of the place and bound him on a constable's horse, declaring that they would "disembowel him under the eyes of Capet and his brood." The Sparnassiens[3] who followed the berline as far as the turning to Mardeuil were convinced, like the people of Chouilly, that the prisoners "would never reach Paris."

[1] *Partie de Plaisir, etc.*
[2] *Le Babillard, La Feuille du Jour, Mercure universel, etc.*
[3] (Inhabitants of Epernay.—*Trans.*)

CHAPTER VII

THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE ASSEMBLY

PARIS, meanwhile, had for two days been feeling quite overcome by the excellence of its own behaviour. After the first few hours the panic as to the consequences of the affair had subsided, and the people, reassured by the idea that the King's flight, which might very well have been productive of tragedy, was really only a meaningless escapade that would result in no public calamity, faced the situation without waste of time. With that mobility for which they may always be depended upon, they passed from panic to anger, and from anger to buffoonery. During the afternoon of the 21st frolicsome individuals were to be seen running about the streets in groups, tearing the royal emblems from the escutcheons on the notaries' doors, scraping the fleurs-de-lis from the barbers' shop-fronts, tearing up the portraits of the King and Queen in the print-sellers' windows. A hatter called Louis was forced by some wags to erase his own name from his sign-board. The following announcement was cried in the streets: "Lost—a King and Queen! A handsome reward will be given to anyone who does not find them." There can be no doubt that the crowd was prompted to these disorderly amusements by deliberate agitators, who knew that the revolutionary ideals, presented in ways of this kind, would sink into many a simple mind that had been holding out for the last two years against all the theories of the politicians.

And in the same way the evilly disposed made capital out of that time-honoured type of myth that is always so eagerly seized upon in similar circumstances by popular stupidity.

No details of the flight were known but this, which was told as a certainty: that the King was drunk, and had to be carried to the berline by four men. There was, moreover, a letter from the Queen which a laundress, the wife of Flandre, had intercepted at Madame de Rochechouart's house and had handed over to the Committee of Inquiries. Marie Antoinette, addressing the Prince de Condé, thus expressed herself: "*Mon ami*, do not pay any attention to the decree aimed at you by the Assembly of pigs. We will find a way to make these toads and frogs skip. This is the way our fat man is going to get off—" And then followed the details of a scheme for flying to a castle belonging to the Prince de Croy on the frontier of Hainaut.[1]

For this was the belief of the majority. The public, taking probabilities for facts, unanimously believed that the royal family had reached the northern frontier. On some points there was much precision of detail. A carrier called Claude Tapon had recognised the King, "who had left the carriage *pour faire ses besoins*" on the road between Senlis and Vauderlan.[2] It was said that the royal family, having left the Tuileries by the famous underground passage, "had gone down the Seine in a well armed boat as far as Saint-Ouen," and gained the Forest of Compiègne, where they found, by way of escort, the whole Royal Swedish Regiment, commanded by the Comte de Fersen.[3] These inventions assuaged the curiosity of the public, but as a matter of fact nothing was known. Thirty hours after the fact of Louis XVI's departure was authenticated neither the National Assembly nor any person in Paris was able to say, or indeed had any idea, by what means the King and his family had quitted the Tuileries, in what carriage they had travelled, or what road they had pursued.[4]

This sudden effacement of the royal power, which an

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 35.

[2] Archives of the Record Office of the Court of Orléans, and document quoted by Bimbenet.

[3] *Le Babillard.*

[4] Letter signed Saint-Priet, addressed to Madame de Saint-Priet, wife of the Councillor of State, at Montpellier, Paris, June 22, 1791.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 27.

immense majority still regarded as the life and soul of France, created a feeling of overpowering lethargy and desolation, which one may detect in every contemporary narrative and newspaper article. "Nothing, still nothing!" These were the words with which the Parisians greeted each other during those two long days, the 21st and 22nd of June. The first fictitious reports, announcing successively that the King had been stopped at Meaux, at Senlis, at Valenciennes, and on the shore at Honfleur, were followed by the most complete ignorance of his destination; and every hour that passed added to the impatience of the people and the mystery of the affair. On one point all were agreed: that the fugitives had had ample time to reach the frontier, and that it would therefore be from some foreign country that they would dictate the terms they doubtless meant to exact from the revolutionary party.

The same nightmare of uncertainty and anxiety obsessed the Assembly, which had now been declared *en permanence*. Its dignity demanded an unruffled deportment, and in order to show the world that a vulgar political accident such as the disappearance of the Executive did not preoccupy it to the exclusion of the sacred interests of humanity, it had, when the first excitement subsided, returned to the discussion of the Penal Code, which had been cut short a month before.

It was a seductive opportunity for the admirers of Cato to affect a stoical deportment. In their anxiety to exhibit an air of resolution worthy of antiquity, they sat, looking very wise on their curule chairs, affecting to listen to the *rapporteur*, Le Peltier Saint-Fargeau, moving the adoption of articles 6 and 7 of the first section of Document No. II. These were passed without discussion; but this state of constraint only lasted for a few minutes, for the attention of the house was elsewhere. Whenever a door opened or a sound was heard in the hall, every mind was at once on the alert and every eye was asking: "Is there any news? Are they caught?"

The thoughts of all present were occupied by one idea; and on the arrival of M. de Laporte, the Intendant of the Civil List, whom the Assembly had summoned by special

decree, Le Peltier Saint-Fargeau and the Penal Code were altogether extinguished by a flood of overwhelming curiosity. Laporte was known to be very much in the confidence of Louis XVI, and it had just been heard that at eight o'clock in the morning he had visited Duport, the Minister of Justice, in order to give him a memorial written "entirely by the King's hand." Duport had refused to receive the document, but there was good reason to think that in it Louis XVI had made known his motives in taking flight, his place of retirement, and his political demands.

No sooner had President Beauharnais proposed that the Assembly should hear M. de Laporte than there arose from every bench a positive explosion of relief. "Yes! Yes; let him come in!" Instantly the green velvet curtain was half lifted, and the Intendant of the Civil List, between two ushers, appeared at the bar. He was a man of fifty years of age, cold, conventional, and haughty. He bowed, and Beauharnais signed to him to speak.

"This morning," said Laporte, making a point of addressing the President only, "this morning, at eight o'clock, a packet was brought to me from the King. I opened the packet, and found in it a note from the King and a fairly long memorial, written by the hand of his Majesty."

He had immediately gone, he went on to say, to the Minister of Justice, who had advised him to seek rather the President of the Assembly. Then, in a familiar and slightly disdainful tone, he related how, being ignorant of Beauharnais's address, he had first sought him in the Rue Neuve des Mathurins,[1] then in the Rue des Petits Augustins, where he had learnt from the porter that the President had just gone out. Laporte had then determined to go home, making up his mind that nothing would induce him to move out of his house again that day. It was there that the decree of the National Assembly had found him.

The deputies were trembling with impatience while they listened to this preamble, whose triviality contrasted strikingly

[1] It was there that Beauharnais's house was situated. Its façade still exists in the yard of No. 32 Rue des Mathurins, bearing the words *Hôtel de Beauharnais* upon a marble tablet.

with the importance of the events concerned. Beauharnais asked the question that was burning on every lip.

"Have you the memorial with you?"

"It has never left my pocket," answered Laporte.

"By whom was it delivered to you?"

"At eight o'clock this morning, by a servant who is attached to the room of the King's principal *valet-de-chambre*."[1]

The majesty of royalty was still surrounded by so much prestige that no one dared to ask that the memorial might be read, although all were filled with the greatest longing to hear it. The deputies looked at Laporte as though his pocket were full of thunder, but much as they desired it to explode, none of them cared to take the responsibility of saying the word that would produce the detonation. The President himself, who acted that day with so much dignity and such admirable presence of mind,[2] was not bold enough to put the decisive question. He tried to gain time.

"Do you know," he asked of Laporte. "the name of the servant who delivered the packet to you?"

And the Intendant, with a slightly ironical manner, as though surprised in such circumstances to be asked nothing more important than the name of a valet, replied:

"I do not know it, but it would be easy to find it out, if the Assembly would give the order."

"Read the memorial!" murmured a few voices furtively.

But Beauharnais again evaded the point, and addressing Laporte:

"Have you the King's note?" said he.

"Yes, M. le President."

Then followed an embarrassed silence. What was to be done? Should they yield to curiosity, and demand that the contents of the royal document should be communicated to them? Or would it be better, on the contrary, to ignore that unfortunate statement, which was perhaps so conceived as to defy the national representatives and drive them to resort to some *coup d'État?* Laporte waited impassively, with the

[1] Parliamentary Archives, 1st series, XXVII, sitting of June 21, 1791.
[2] *Mémoires de Barère*, Vol. I, p. 322.

terrible paper in his pocket. The whole Assembly was stamping with impatience on the banks of this Rubicon. It was Charles Lameth who was the first to plunge in bravely.

"The memorial must be read," he said.

Instantly there were cries of "Read it!" "No, no!"

"It is possible," went on Lameth, "that this memorial, written by the King's hand, contains matters of grave importance. I think that it should be read in the National Assembly."

This suggestion was greeted with nearly unanimous cheers. Beauharnais, scrupulous to the last, asked:

"Does anyone oppose the reading of the document?"

"No! No!"

"Will you have the goodness, M. de Laporte, to place the King's memorial on the table?"

The Intendant crossed the floor of the hall, and approaching the oval table, drew from his pocket a fairly bulky manuscript tied round with a pale blue ribbon, which he handed to Régnier, one of the secretaries. As for the note that the King had addressed to him personally, he begged that it might not be read in public. There was some discussion on this point. Beauharnais informed the Assembly of Laporte's wish, and it was decided, in spite of some opposition, that the note, being the Intendant's private property, should be returned to him. The disturbance roused by the incident ceased abruptly when Régnier was seen to rise and prepare to read the royal message. It was amid the most absolute silence that he began:

Proclamation of the King, addressed to all the French, on his departure from Paris.

"Excuse me," interrupted Gaultier-Biauzat, the deputy from Clermont-Ferrand. "Excuse me—is this memorial signed with the King's hand?"

This interruption was greeted with an outburst of impatience, while Régnier answered in the affirmative.

"It is a trap that has been laid for you," insisted Biauzat; "you are falling from one trap into another."

A general outcry silenced him, and he sat down. Régnier began again:

Proclamation of the King, addressed to all the French, on his departure from Paris.

Then, without break or pause, he read that lengthy composition, written in a monotonous style somewhat resembling that of a sermon. Moment by moment, as one futile accusation after another fell upon the ears of the Assembly, the stifling emotion that had seized them as they heard the opening words gradually passed off. The opposed parties took note of each other; malicious glances were exchanged between the dejected royalists and the "progressives," whose joy was great though carefully restrained. The dominant feeling, however, was a kind of uneasiness, the half disappointed surprise of those who, with nerves on the stretch, are expecting a terrific thunder-clap and hear only the shrill report of a child's pistol. The paragraph in which the King complained "of the lack of comforts in his rooms" was heard in shame-faced silence, but a murmur ran round the hall when he went on to lament the inadequacy of the Civil List, 25,000,000 being insufficient "for the splendour of the establishment it was his duty to maintain, to do honour to the dignity of the crown of France." Never was the misunderstanding that was at the heart of the Revolution more plainly exhibited; these *bourgeois*, who had gained so much from the reforms that had been carried out, could not forgive a word of complaint on the part of the man they had robbed, whose position they considered, quite honestly, to be still as desirable as he himself, equally sincerely, thought it to be degraded.

The reading of the proclamation lasted for an hour. It was interrupted once only; when there was an allusion to "the diminution of the resources of the royal purse for the aid of the unfortunate," a voice from the Left cried, "of unfortunate courtiers."

The King's message, in short, did nothing but give expression to his resentment. It contained no threat, no indication of his plans nor of the means he meant to employ to reconquer his kingdom; and his silence made it appear as though in leaving Paris he had tendered his resignation, like a clerk who runs away because he dislikes the way the work

is carried on in his office. Even before Régnier had finished reading the whole Assembly, now completely reassured, was once more breathing freely. Nothing very tragic could come from an adversary of this kind, and it was with an effort that cost them little that the deputies, on the suggestion of the Abbé Grégoire, disdainfully passed on to the order of the day. They returned to the discussion of the Penal Code, but merely for the sake of appearances, for hardly a word had been uttered when voices were heard demanding an hour's rest. The sitting, which was suspended at a quarter past four, had lasted without interruption since nine o'clock in the morning.

The deputies, dispersing in groups, sought the bars and restaurants of the Terrasse du Manège and the Jardin des Feuillants, many of them taking advantage of this interval to "take a breath of Paris air." The town was astonishingly tranquil; the people had the appearance of keeping holiday.[1] They already knew the substance of the royal lamentation, and were discussing it with a kind of pity, while waiting to hear "whither the bird had flown." This enthralling speculation was the beginning and end of all their thoughts. The conduct of the National Assembly was vastly admired, and if Lafayette's ill-luck was made the subject of a certain amount of banter, there were only plaudits and cheers for the Swiss officers who had come during the day, with their venerable major-general, d'Affry, at their head, to take an oath of fidelity and devotion to the Assembly. The evening, then, promised to be as peaceful as possible when the sitting was resumed in the Riding School at six o'clock, under the temporary presidency of Dauchy.

As had been the case before the suspension of the sitting, the Assembly found it extremely difficult to fill up the time. There was no news of the fugitives, no suspicion as to the road they had taken. It was necessary, therefore, to await events, a matter none too easy for an assembly of men half delirious with impatience, who might easily be carried away by any untimely suggestion that a blustering fire-eater might choose to put forward.

[1] *Mémoires de Barère*, Vol. I., p. 321.

BARNAVE.
From an unpublished Drawing by Gros, 1790.

And indeed this disaster was nearly brought to pass, shortly after the resumption of the sitting, by an awkward phrase in which Regnaud called the ambassadors of foreign countries to account. The discussion grew bitter, and soon it was necessary to revert to the Penal Code, which the Assembly continued to take in small doses, as though it were a paregoric.

They were dozing over Article 9, when a godsend came to them in the form of a military interlude. Rochambeau appeared at the bar, his hair snowy with powder and his general officer's uniform fitting like a glove. He was going, by order of the Minister, to take command of the Army of the North, and he swore solemnly "to be obedient to the decrees of the Assembly and to shed his blood for the defence of his country." His oath was greeted with cheers and shouts and clapping of hands: and behind him other officers appeared—Messieurs de Crillon, Lafayette, de Rostaing, and d'Elbecq—all of whom swore fidelity to the nation and obedience to the Assembly. The enthusiasm grew; all the deputies were on their feet, and from the benches there descended one by one all the legislators who had employments in the army: Montesquiou, d'Aiguillon, de Menou, de Clermont d'Amboise, d'Arenberg, de Custine, de Praslin, de Tracy, de la Tour-Maubourg; and as the representative of his colleagues the last named, whose tall figure towered above them all, took the same oath of fidelity. Charles de Lameth, who also had the honour of commanding a regiment, proposed that a new oath should be formulated by decree, and that all the soldiers in the Assembly should be called upon to subscribe to it on pain of expulsion. His speech reflected the anxiety that everyone was vainly trying to conceal—the fear of the threatening morrow.

"In twenty-four hours," he said, "the kingdom may be alight; we may be face to face with the enemy."

This open allusion to a danger hitherto feared in silence produced a thrill of patriotism throughout the Assembly. For more than half an hour nothing was heard but the outpouring of chivalrous sentiments and the exchange of vows and congratulations, which were only brought to an end by

the introduction of a bill for transforming the National Guards of the kingdom into an active army with regular pay, to be maintained until the State was no longer in such danger as to require special services from her citizens. This involved a daily expenditure of 300,000 *livres*, or 110,000,000 a year—but enthusiasm was the order of the day, and the eleven articles of the decree were passed bodily without discussion; and even so the matter was of sufficient length to save the Assembly from resorting to the Penal Code to occupy the time till news should arrive. At nine o'clock in the evening nothing had been heard; at eleven, still nothing; and the President, having consulted his colleagues, suspended the sitting for an hour.

The streets were illuminated;[1] the crowd was as gay as if it were Sunday. At the Opéra, *Castor et Pollux* was filling the house to overflowing, while the Théâtre de la Nation was giving *Brutus* and *Le Legs*.[2] The more daring among the people left their own part of the town and either made their way as far as the barriers, or else came to prowl round the Assembly with a view to picking up information; but the greater number remained prudently in their own doorways, in the fear of some undefined danger, such as the sudden descent of the Austrians upon Paris. The population had tacitly resolved with one accord to watch through the night in the hope that something would occur, so great was their curiosity to know whether the fugitives would be overtaken before reaching the frontier; but when at about midnight the illuminations died down, they grew discouraged, the wayfarers went home, the doors were shut, and the town went to sleep as usual. Not a patrol was now to be seen, not a sound to be heard; but still, like a watchful sentinel, the Assembly obstinately held to its *permanence*. In the *cafés* of the Manège, or under the trees of Les Feuillants or Les Capucins, the deputies ate their supper, enjoyed the fresh air, and calculated the probabilities of the King's arrest and the approximate hour at which they could hear the news.

At midnight they resumed the sitting. This time they had

[1] See Modeste, *Le Passage de Louis XVI à Meaux*.
[2] *La Feuille du Jour*.

really nothing to say to each other, and no one was brave enough to produce the Penal Code. Merle, one of the secretaries, read the minutes of the day's sitting, which were discussed, re-read, corrected, and finally despatched to be drafted. In this way they killed an hour. The benches were gradually growing empty, and such of the deputies as persisted in keeping their seats were silent. They were forced to listen to the reading of some more minutes—those of the sitting of the 20th—and then once more to those of the day, which were languidly discussed and then sent off to the printers. Moreover, a representative of l'Île de France and the East Indies took advantage of the general lassitude to go into the subject of regulating the importation of articles from Madagascar into the Indies, and the duties imposed upon them. The deputies listened to him without emotion. At last, to keep him quiet, they were about to suggest a return to the order of the day, and the Penal Code was on the point of being produced, when the President, of his charity, suspended the sitting. It was then half past one, and by three o'clock he was again in his chair. What is it? Is there any news? No, nothing is known as yet.

The sitting was resumed as the awnings overhead gleamed in the first rays of daylight. Very few were present; even the secretaries were asleep. This is obvious from the brevity of the minutes, which record only one incident during this early morning sitting. A certain M. Lucas, the deputy from Moulins, who was plainly much exasperated, had calculated that the couriers despatched in pursuit of the King could not reach the frontier in less than four days, and asked if it were not a matter of great urgency to try more speedy means. His motion fell flat amid the general sleepiness.

"We are going to suspend the sitting," was the President's reply; and on someone asking at what hour the deputies were to return, he answered "that news might arrive at any moment, and that since the Assembly was sitting *en permanence*, he could do no more than break off its deliberations for a time."

It was then four o'clock in the morning.

At nine o'clock the deputies were again in their places.

The palace of the Tuileries was closed and guarded; in the court of the Louvre the workmen were still putting up the great altar for the Feast of Corpus Christi on the morrow. Timid souls, surprised to find themselves still at large, gave credit for the fact to the Assembly, and were not slow to observe, "We have no King; nevertheless we slept well." The people were now persuaded that the royal family had succeeded in leaving France, and were even surprised that thirty hours should have gone by without any certain news of the fact. The silence was inexplicable, and there were many who fancied, not unreasonably, that it threatened an unpleasant sequel.

In the Assembly the absence of news produced absolute stupefaction. Not one of the couriers despatched on the previous day had reappeared; not one had contrived to send the least information. How many hours were they to spend in this state of ignorance? How were they to pass the time during their *permanence?* Lameth, at the beginning of the sitting, announced a fact in reference to the crown diamonds which gave reason to believe that the King and Queen had not only abstracted none of the treasure of which they had the use, but had on the contrary, before their departure, returned all the jewels that were in their possession. The organisation of the national constabulary was the next subject that arose, but the discussion languished, and the deputies only listened for want of something better to do. They woke up to applaud and accept the invitation of the *curé* of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, who requested them one and all to follow the procession on Corpus Christi Day. They then left the constabulary and passed on to the navy, which they deserted in turn to discuss the regulation of duties on colonial goods. The Assembly was absent-minded, distracted, enervated; and it was amid the hum of conversation that Roussillon, in the name of the Committee of Agriculture, retailed the substance of the thirty-five articles of the tariff of colonial produce: "To be exempt from all duties: bullocks, bacons, butters, and salted salmons, and also imported candles."

No one interrupted him; no one listened to him. It was

midday, and still no news had arrived. Those whose impatience led them to make continual journeys to the Committee of Inquiries brought back with them the most baffling information. The King was at Aulnai, near Paris, in the house of a loyal brewer named M. Acloque.[1] A moment later came the news that the royal family had arrived at Metz, that the Comte d'Artois was preparing to cross the frontier at the head of 40,000 men, "but that he would wait till August, to avoid creating a rising among the peasants by destroying the crops."[2] At about one o'clock, however, a persistent rumour was spread abroad that a courier had just arrived at the Guildhall, bringing the official news of the King's arrest at Lille. An usher was despatched, and returned with a letter from Bailly. "The same rumour is being circulated at the Guildhall, where it is reputed to have come from the Assembly: both versions are equally false."[3] And the sitting proceeded in profound melancholy. Tronchet introduced at some length a bill concerned with "the accumulation of tithes and harvest dues," which was soon dropped in order that the form of oath adopted by the Militar, Committee might be read. This, at all events, was of interest. One by one there stepped on to the platform all the deputies who had any right whatever to be considered as belonging to the army, as well as all the Knights of St. Louis. Beauharnais was the first to repeat the formula and take the oath,[4] and after him each man mounted the steps, extended his hand, and said, "I swear it!" About a hundred members filed up in this way, amid the hearty cheers of their colleagues; and then, this interlude being over, it became necessary, in the

[1] Archives of the Record Office of the Court of Orléans.—Bimbenet, 1st edition, p. 204.

[2] Bimbenet, 1st edition, p. 205.

[3] Bailly adds: "The people, however, are persuaded that they are true, and the General Council has just requested all the deputies of sections who were at the Guildhall to return to their own districts and use the promptest measures to persuade the people of their mistake."

[4] This was the formula: "I swear to employ the arms placed in my hands for the defence of my country, and to maintain against all enemies, domestic and foreign, the Constitution established by decree of the National Assembly. I swear to die rather than submit to the invasion of French territory by foreign troops, and to obey no orders but those given in accordance with the decrees of the National Assembly."

absence of any other occupation, to return "to the accumulation of tithes and harvest dues." At three o'clock the sitting was suspended, to be resumed at half past five. And still there was no news. An hour was passed in listening to a report on the abolition of export duties, and another in discussing the idea of an address to the French nation.

Weariness, boredom, impatience, and above all the consciousness of their own impotence and inaction, combined to cause disruption in the Assembly. Dauchy had replaced the exhausted Beauharnais in the President's chair; Chabroud had replaced Dauchy. At ten o'clock in the evening, having worn out their powers of endurance, the members obtained another suspension of the sitting, and repaired to the awnings of the restaurants near the entrance of the Riding School, or to Beaumaine's, or the Café au Perron, or to the confectioners of Les Feuillants, or to Pascal's. A few only of the deputies, prostrate with fatigue, remained on their benches in the deserted hall, where four chandeliers furnished with tapers like church candles produced a very inadequate light,[1] and cast great gloomy shadows into the corners and under the galleries.

Suddenly the wooden passages echoed to the sound of a multitude of footsteps; clamorous voices were heard below, crying, "The King is taken! The King is taken!" Every door was burst open, and the excited deputies rushed into the hall, running hither and thither, bestriding the benches, and calling out from the floor to the public galleries, "He has been arrested!" Chabroud, the President, hastily climbed into his seat. Then from the agitated group at the foot of the platform two couriers emerged for one moment; two dusty, bewildered, and haggard men were pushed and hustled and carried off their feet, and having laid some papers on the secretaries' table, disappeared instantly, borne off by the crowd amidst cheers and shouts. Then there fell a sudden silence. The President was on his feet, and every motionless head, every gaping mouth, every eye was turned towards him.

"I have just received," he said, "a packet containing

[1] Brette, *Le local des assemblées parlementaires.*

several documents, the contents of which I am about to communicate to the Assembly. Before the reading begins I beg that it may be heard in the most profound silence, and I request that the public will give no sign of approval or disapproval."

Already one of the secretaries had risen with a paper in his hand. He read as follows:—

Letter from the Municipal Officers of Varennes.

"Gentlemen, in our present state of alarm we authorise M. Mangin, a surgeon of Varennes, to set off on the spot to inform the National Assembly that his Majesty is here, and to entreat them to instruct us as to the action we should take, this 21st June 1791.—The Municipal Officers of Varennes."

And where is Varennes? In Argonne, it appears; in the Verdun direction, ten leagues from the frontier. This cry of distress, this agonised appeal from the little town with the unknown name, the thought of the dangers that threatened it and of the tragedies that perhaps had stained its streets with blood during the twenty-four hours since the letter was written, the impossibility of sending it immediate help, the general feeling of alarm, bewilderment, and surprise, all tended to enhance the significance of this last event, this moving chapter that had just been added to the romance of the Revolution. As they listened the nerves of the whole Assembly became quite unstrung by emotion. The next paper to be read was the official report of the episode at Sainte-Ménehould, of the passing of the berline and the disarmament of the dragoons; then a copy of de Bouillé's orders with regard to the disposition of the troops; and finally the following address from the municipality of Clermont-en-Argonne, which rang like a tocsin and set every heart trembling:—

"Some persons of the highest importance have just been arrested at Varennes. That town and the town of Clermont are full of troops, and the National Guard of Clermont has

prevented them from leaving the town. But lose no time—come to our help! Other troops are on the point of arriving. Our country is in danger. The dragoons are patriots. Come without loss of time."

The whole Assembly was in an uproar. The much-feared catastrophe had happened, then: civil war was upon them; at that very moment the peasants of Argonne were fighting with the royal army! All the members were shouting out different suggestions at the same moment. "Recall Bouillé!" "Close the barriers!" "Prepare for a siege!" While this noise was going on, Chabroud left the President's chair, and was replaced by d'André, who suspended the sitting at eleven o'clock at night. And when at midnight it was resumed, the Assembly met calmly, and almost silently, so absorbed were the members in their own thoughts. This miracle had been effected by some words of Toulongeon. "We are perhaps," he had said, "living through the most painful and solemn moment that history has ever commemorated in the annals of a nation!" A decree to the following effect was passed unanimously: "That the most urgent and active measures shall be taken to protect the person of the King, of the heir presumptive to the throne, and of the other members of the royal family. For the furtherance of this object, MM. La Tour-Maubourg, Pétion, and Barnave shall repair to Varennes, and any other place to which it shall be necessary to proceed, with the style and authority of Commissioners of the National Assembly. They shall be accompanied by M. Dumas, Adjutant-General of the Army, charged to execute their orders."

The three members named came down from their benches, bowed to the President, and quickly left the hall. They were followed by cheers, for the choice of Commissioners met with universal approval: Barnave—eloquent, shrewd, zealous; La Tour-Maubourg—attractive and good-looking, a liberal royalist; Pétion—very popular, vigorous and handsome, a man of advanced opinions. Each of them represented a section of the dominant party in the Assembly, and all three were young and full of zeal and ambition. Pétion, the eldest of them, was not yet thirty-eight, while Barnave was but thirty.

They had left the Assembly at half-past twelve, and two hours later Pétion's name was announced to La Tour-Maubourg, whose house in the Rue Saint-Dominique had been fixed upon as the meeting-place. Barnave had not yet arrived. But Duport the Minister and General Lafayette were there, as well as a deputy from Moulins named Tracy, and they entered into conversation. "What will be done with the King? Will he be shut up?" said one. "Will he go on reigning?" asked another. "Will he be given a Council?" All were agreed that "the fat pig was a great embarrassment."[1]

Lafayette "made jokes and chuckled," but Duport was more reserved. Pétion, who knew Maubourg by sight only, was silent and rather distrustful. It was four o'clock before Barnave appeared, and it was in broad daylight that the three Commissioners drove off in the same carriage, with two ushers on the box, pausing in the Rue Thévenot to pick up Adjutant-General Mathieu Dumas. The streets of Paris were astir as they passed through the Faubourg Saint-Martin and reached the barrier of La Villette. Here there was a short halt, for the National Guard was allowing no one to leave the town, and for a moment it seemed as though the deputies would be obliged to return as they came, by reason of the Assembly's own decree. After an explanation, however, the gates were opened and the carriage dashed through the barrier.

. . . . . .

The weather was glorious, and the road was, so to speak, alive. For now, in every village and every isolated farm, it was known that the King had fled and had been arrested. Between every two posting-houses on the high-road there was a constant ebb and flow of couriers, express messengers, and idlers, while the peasants stood at their doors and stared. At every halting-place the carriage of the Commissioners of the Assembly was heralded, expected, surrounded, and greeted with applause; the ostlers showed their zeal, and the postillions sprang into the saddle joyously and took a pride in keeping up a good pace. At nine o'clock in the morning

[1] Pétion's *Relation du Voyage.*

the Commissioners drove into La Ferté-sous-Jouarre—sixteen leagues from Paris—over the Pont de la Marne. At the entrance to the town their carriage was stopped, for the Corpus Christi procession was coming out of the church. They alighted, therefore, and waited till it had filed past; after which they repaired to a hotel and breakfasted while the horses were being changed. The corporation of the town came to welcome them, and informed them that the royal family had spent the night at Châlons, and were being brought back to Paris by the Épernay road, escorted by a crowd of peasants and national guards.[1]

Leaving the turning to Montmirail on the right, they pursued their way along the road to Château Thierry, changing their couriers at short intervals. In the villages the people were preparing to go out in carts to see the sights, while others banded together and started on foot. The road, indeed, had the appearance of a much frequented street. Pleasure and enthusiasm reigned throughout that beautiful and rich valley of the Marne, where during the midday heat of summer the glorious day seems to scatter seeds of sunshine; and along all the white paths that wound across the burning plains were bands of country folk, raising the dust in clouds in their haste to reach the high-road.

At midday the Commissioners were at Château Thierry, and at about three o'clock they reached Dormans, a big village where the main street was flanked on both sides by houses of a respectable middle-class appearance. Here they stopped at the Hôtel du Louvre, a large low hostelry near the circular

[1] "La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, Thursday, nine o'clock. Monsieur le Président, we learn that the King and those who are with him spent last night at Châlons, whither they were led and escorted by an army of national guards, who hastened from the neighbouring departments immediately the news of the King's presence at Varennes became known to them; we hope to meet him this evening. In the course of our journey we have given the strictest orders to secure his safe and peaceable return, and we have been heartily supported by the local arrangements. Everywhere the King's departure has made the same impression as in Paris. The bearing of the people is quiet and proud; we have received endless proofs of their confidence, and of their respect for the National Assembly. We have the honour to be, Monsieur le Président, your very humble and very obedient servant [*sic*], Pétion, Barnave, La Tour-Maubourg." Archives of the Record Office of the Court of Orléans. A facsimile of this document was published by Bimbenet in his first edition.

PÉTION.

From an unpublished Drawing by Labadye, 1790.

space where the Mayor's house stood, which was at the entrance to the little town on the side nearest Paris.

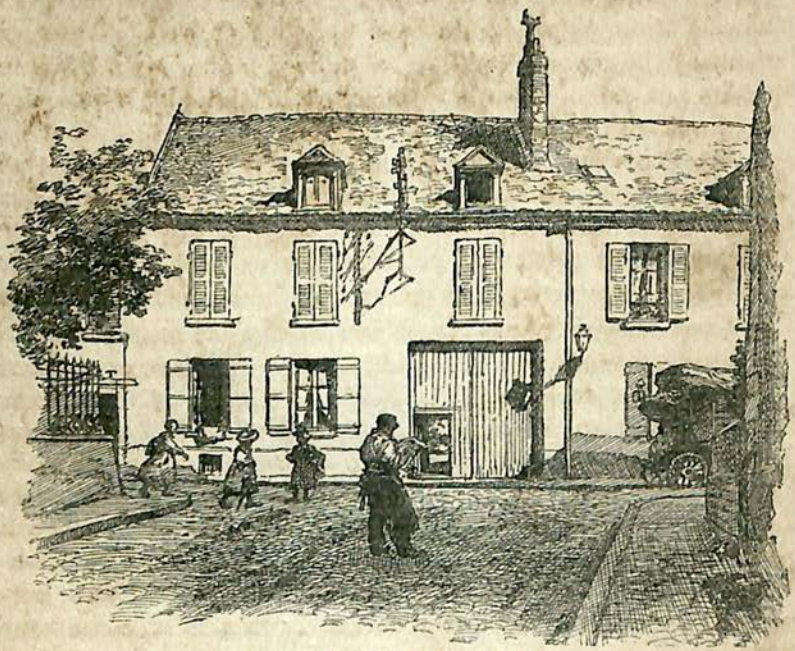
Here, as Barnave, Pétion, Maubourg, and Dumas were preparing to dine, surrounded by interested spectators, a continual stream of couriers poured in, bearing alarming rumours. "De Bouillé's army is flying to the King's rescue; cavalry has been seen on the hills above the Marne; the band of patriot volunteers who are bringing back the royal berline by forced marches is worn out, and in no fit state to resist an attack from seasoned troops; the King may be taken out of their hands at any moment; Varennes is destroyed, and the inhabitants massacred; the whole country has risen to repulse the enemy, and it would appear that the little town of Épernay, where he has stopped for the moment, is to be the scene of the encounter."

Although this information seemed very improbable, and a wild-goose chase of the kind on the part of de Bouillé would have no chance of success, the Commissioners contented themselves "with eating a morsel and drinking a glass standing," and hastened on their way. Their pace, after they left Dormans, was slower than before, so greatly was the road obstructed with villagers who had hurried out on hearing that de Bouillé's uhlans were approaching. These were the heroic peasants of Champagne, whose ardour was still uncooled a quarter of a century later, at the time of the great invasions that formed the epilogue to this drama that was now beginning. They all came forth boldly in a body, these good folk whose simplicity and ignorance were proverbial, "bringing with them the old men, the women, the children," armed with pitchforks and pruning-hooks, flails, spits, swords, and old muskets. They were as gay as a wedding-party. Husbands embraced their wives, saying, "Well, well, if it is necessary we will go to the frontier and kill that rascal! Ah, we shall catch him, let them do what they will!"

They ran as quickly as the Commissioners' carriage, cheering and shouting "*Vive la Nation!*" The deputies in their post-chaise were "amazed and touched," and passed on bowing and smiling.

Pétion tells us that their conversation was of "indifferent

matters." This extraordinary affair of Varennes, in its various aspects, seems to have been an epitome and symbol of the whole impending Revolution. Here was the inept and vanquished and humiliated monarchy, with its mask of resignation, being dragged as a prisoner to the feet of its victorious rival the Assembly, while the latter had despatched three of its members, three only, of whom each represented



POSTING-HOUSE AT DORMANS.

one of those parties whose relentless struggles were soon to tear the country to pieces: a royalist, a constitutionalist, a republican; the Right, the Centre, the Left; *la Plaine*, *le Marais*, *la Montagne*. These three, as they sat knee to knee in their carriage, in circumstances so conducive to the outpourings of fraternity—a word that was on their lips every moment—were watching each other, spying upon each other, suspicious and uncommunicative; and this comedy, with all its underlying pettiness, was enacted in the full light of day, amid the simple-hearted enthusiasm of a people who

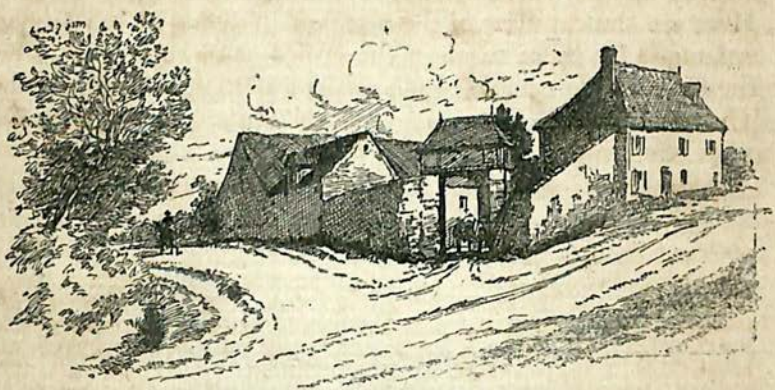
were so obstinate in their credulity and so much excited by promises that twenty-five years of massacres, wars, and misery were hardly enough to disillusion them.

The three deputies, then, abstained from sharing their thoughts with each other. There was one moment, however, when they went so far as to mention the King. All the three agreed that "he was a fool who had allowed himself to be carried away, and that he must be treated as an imbecile"—when Pétion surprised Barnave exchanging with Maubourg "one of those signs that express understanding with those to whom one makes them, and mistrust of those by whom one does not wish to be detected."

After this they avoided the subject of politics and resorted to pleasantries. Dumas, as he rode beside the carriage, played at being a soldier, sweeping the horizon and elaborating tactics with a great air of strategical knowledge. "If de Bouillé were to arrive," he pointed out, "he could only come up from that direction; he could be checked in that defile, and his cavalry would be unable to act." He even carried out a manœuvre, reviewing the National Guard of one of the villages with great solemnity, and then returned to his companions, who were deriving much amusement from his military pretensions. The village militias accepted him quite seriously as a warrior, and he himself was the first to laugh at their confidence in him. This is an example of the contrast—a contrast so striking that it never fails to be surprising—between the official pomposity of the heroes of the Revolution and the gaiety of their behaviour in private. Whenever one chances upon them behind the scenes, without buskins or mask, one finds them so young and so engaging in their moods, so full of the love of life and the joy of adventure, that they really seem to be overcome with amusement—there is no other word—at the catastrophes for which they are responsible and the hurricane that is whirling them off their feet.

It was seven o'clock in the evening; the sun had hardly begun to sink behind the forest of Ris, and the heat was overpowering. Beyond the villages of Troissy and Mareuil-le-Port the undulating road passes between some hills on

the right and the river Marne, and on the other side of the river, in the distance, the landscape is bounded by a long slope, clothed with great expanses of green, the dull green of the chalky vineyards of Champagne, intersected by white cliffs and crowned by shaggy woods. The number of couriers multiplied, all heralding the approach of the royal procession, as the deputies' carriage passed through the hamlet of Port-à-Binson, while the people who stood at the doors shouted, "The King is coming!" For another half-league



THE FARM OF LE CHÊNE-FENDU.

the Commissioners journeyed on between the lines of peasants who had settled down comfortably by the roadside, seated on the bank, with their feet in the ditch; then they heard a distant uproar, and saw every head turned in the same direction, towards a spot where a great cloud of dust was rising. At the hamlet of La Cave, a little cluster of decrepit, tottering cottages, some national guards came up to the Commissioners' carriage, which was now proceeding at a foot's pace between the double ranks of the impatient crowd.

"Gentlemen, here is the King!" they said.

A compact mob blocked the road and overflowed into the side-lanes and fields as far as the Marne, which flows near the highway at that point; a tumultuous, disorderly mob of about two thousand men: national guards in a variety of

uniforms, some in blouses, some in guernseys; some on horseback, some on foot, some crowded into carts; dishevelled, perspiring, thirsty, dusty, triumphant. On the left of the road was a farm,[1] with its gateway and the dovecote above it set crookedly in the wall; and here at the foot of a little declivity was the royal berline, standing with its doors open, in the midst of that seething rabble. It had all the appearance of a wreck in a storm.

The three Commissioners alighted. The ushers preceded them, and all heads were uncovered. "Room! Silence! Here are the deputies of the National Assembly!" A passage was made for them through the crowd, and they approached the door of the berline, whence a confused noise was issuing. The Queen, in a state of great agitation and distress, and with tears in her eyes, leant forward:

"Messieurs! Messieurs! Ah, M. de Maubourg!"

[1] The farm of Le Chêne-Fendu.

It is not easy to be sure of the exact spot where the Commissioners of the Assembly met the royal berline; the evidence of the eye-witnesses is not consistent. "At Port-à-Buisson" (*sic*), writes the King in his journal, "At a spot a league or a league and a half from Épernay, on a very beautiful road," says Pétion. "Between Dormans and Épernay, about a quarter of a league before reaching Épernay," reported Barnave to the Assembly on the 25th June. "Between Épernay and Dormans," observes Valory. This also is what Madame de Tourzel writes. These indications, it will be seen, are more or less vague, and almost contradictory.

I think we must attach more importance to the words of Mathieu Dumas. He was the tactician in the affair, and in that capacity must have examined the country more attentively than his companions; moreover, the information he gives is fairly precise. "Between Château-Thierry and Châlons, two leagues beyond Dormans, the carriages had stopped at the foot of a little hill where the road approached the left bank of the Marne." By comparing these lines with the official report of the Châlonnais who accompanied the King—people belonging to the neighbourhood and knowing the country—one may come to a fairly accurate conclusion as to the scene of the meeting. "MM. Roze and Morel, preceding the King," says this report, "had met, as they were approaching the farm of La Cave, MM. La Tour-Maubourg, Barnave, and Pétion . . . they returned with them to the King . . . etc."

The Commissioners of the Assembly then had passed the farm of La Cave before meeting the King; beyond that farm there is only one spot *where the road approaches the left bank of the Marne;* this is by the farm of Le Chêne-Fendu, and this farm stands, in agreement with Mathieu Dumas's statement, "at the foot of a little hill." It was there that the Commissioners found the royal berline standing. One can well understand that the horde of thirsty pedestrians who surrounded it had called a halt as soon as they saw the Marne flowing along by the embankment of the road, which had not touched the river since leaving Épernay.

She spoke "precipitately, breathlessly," and took Maubourg's hand in one of hers, while she held out the other to Barnave.

"Ah, Monsieur, Monsieur! I trust that nothing terrible will happen—that those who came with us will not be made to suffer—that their lives are not in danger!"

Madame Elizabeth pressed Pétion's arm.

"The King did not intend to leave France."

Then Louis XVI in his turn leant forward.

"No, gentlemen," he said volubly; "I was not leaving the country. I have said so, and it is true."

Maubourg answered briefly, while Pétion confined himself to repeating *Ah!* and other insignificant words, "with gestures that were dignified without being repellent, and gentle without being affected." Then, breaking off this colloquy, he drew from his pocket the decree of the Assembly and read it to the King, who listened to it attentively without uttering a word; after which, mounting on the box of the berline, where Malden, Valory, and Moustier were sitting immovably in their yellow liveries, Pétion read the decree for a second time in a very loud voice. The sea of uncovered heads, the awe-struck silence, the sinking sun behind the hills of Châtillon, the shining, golden landscape, gave to this scene a quite peculiar dignity.

Dumas immediately took the escort under his command, and ordered the procession to move on; and the Commissioners having explained to the King "that the proprieties of the situation obliged them to seat themselves in his carriage," Barnave and Pétion did so, not without a certain amount of ceremony.

"But, Sire, we shall inconvenience you—it is impossible that we should find room here!"

And indeed the berline already contained six travellers; but the King insisted.

"Pray sit down. We will sit nearer to each other, and there will be room for you."

He wished, moreover, that none of those who were with him should leave him. He and the Queen, at the back of the carriage, drew apart, and Barnave sat between them in the place of the Dauphin, whom the Queen took on her knee.

The front seat was occupied by Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel, with Madame Royale between them; the latter now stood at her governess's knee, while Pétion sat facing Barnave. As for La Tour-Maubourg, he took refuge in the cabriolet with the women-of-the-bedchamber.

In this crowded state they started off, and instantly an outburst of "chattering" followed. "The King had no intention of leaving the kingdom. The only thing that was really causing them uneasiness was the fate of the three bodyguards." On these two points the same phrases were repeated ten times by each person, the words pouring out with much volubility but little sequence. It was almost as though the theme had been agreed upon beforehand. But soon the conversation languished. Pétion had never before been in the presence of the royal family, and was more occupied in observing them than in talking. He was struck by the simple garments of the travellers, and noticed that their linen was very dirty: then raising his eyes, he perceived in the netting of the carriage a laced hat, the lackey's hat that had been used by the King in his disguise and by an oversight had not been put out of the way.

The intrusion of the Commissioners had created a certain amount of embarrassment among the occupants of the carriage: the Queen was persistently sullen, and soon dropped her veil and was silent.[1] It must be admitted that Barnave had not begun with noticeable tact, for, being imbued with the popular legend that one of the bodyguards upon the box was the Comte de Fersen, the Swedish nobleman whose devotion to the Queen gave so much occasion for scandal, he indulged in a glance and smile that were so full of meaning as to be almost sardonic. Marie Antoinette hastened, with perfect simplicity, to give the names of the three guards, and Barnave, in sudden contrition, became silent. Pétion's

[1] "The arrival of these new travelling companions at first created an atmosphere of gravity and embarrassment in the coach. The Queen, just at first, did not feel at all inclined to have anything to do with them; she even assumed an air of sulkiness, dropped her veil over her face, and determined not to open her mouth for the rest of the journey, so as to avoid speaking a word to the Commissioners."—Narrative of Fontanges, in the *Mémoires de Wéber*.

allusion to the subject was coarser and more insolent. He said he knew everything—"that the fugitives near the palace had entered a hired carriage driven by a Swede called——" He pretended that he could not recall the name, and asked it of the Queen, who replied haughtily:

"I am not in the habit of knowing the names of hired coachmen."

As soon as these first skirmishes were over, however, a kind of cordiality was established. The King's simplicity and good-nature became evident, and the Queen's face "cleared."

She spoke naturally and simply,[1] calling Madame Elizabeth "my little sister," and dancing the Dauphin upon her knee. Madame Royale was more reserved, but played with her brother, while the young prince was very merry, and more especially "very lively," escaping from his mother's arms, and slipping between the knees of the two Commissioners with a roguish expression that had in it, too, a touch of confidence and a touch of fear. He put a thousand questions to "these gentlemen," and while he was playing with the buttons that adorned Barnave's coat he discovered some letters, which he spelt out. *To live in freedom or to die*—such was the motto engraved, in accordance with a fairly common fashion, on these metal buttons. He was delighted at having deciphered the inscription.

"Look, Mamma, do you see?" he said. "To live in freedom or to die." He examined the others.

"Oh, Mamma, it is on them all, it is everywhere! To live in freedom or to die—to live in freedom or to die."

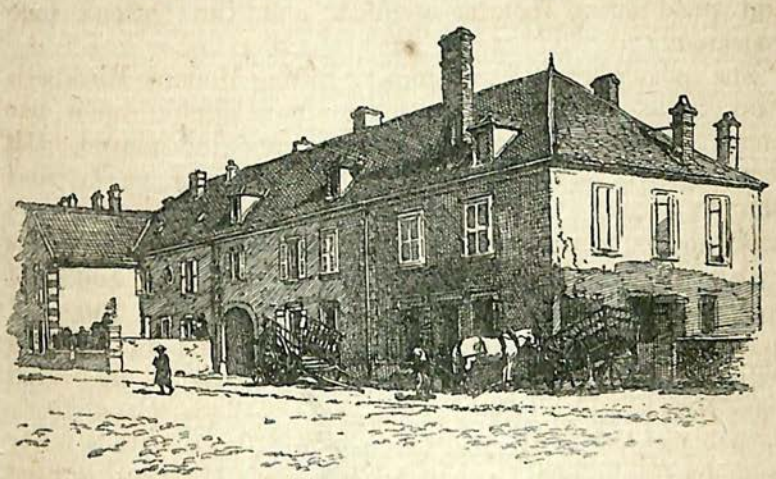
The Queen answered nothing. She gave no sign of sadness, however, nor dejection, but appeared full of good-nature, and had "an air of domesticity" that pleased Pétion, while the King looked on with an expression of satisfaction. Nevertheless he described, with much feeling, the murder of M. de Dampierre.

"It is abominable," said the Queen. "M. de Dampierre did a great deal of good in his parish, and he was assassinated by his own villagers."

[1] Narrative of Fontanges.

Then she related a fact that had touched her very nearly.

"Could you believe it? I was offering the leg of a chicken through the window to a national guard who seemed to be following us with a certain amount of attachment. Well, the people called out to the national guard, *Don't eat it! Beware of it!*—meaning evidently that perhaps the chicken was poisoned. Oh, I admit I was indignant at such a suspicion as that, and I instantly gave some of the same chicken to my children and ate some of it myself."



POSTING-HOUSE AT PORT-À-BINSON.

Then leaving that subject, she hurried on to another without a pause.

"We attended Mass this morning at Châlons—but it was a constitutional Mass."

Madame Elizabeth touched her warningly, and Pétion, who was shocked at this kind of joke, remarked that it was just as well, since "that sort of Mass was the only sort that the King ought to hear."

Thus the mingling of uncongenial companions with the consequent avoidance of dangerous topics, together with the fugitives' ease of mind now that they were protected, had the miraculous effect of making them jest on the subject of their adventure. Night had fallen, and the darkness, which was

nearly total inside the berline, was more conducive to dialogue than to general conversation: Barnave, therefore, talked with the Queen, and Pétion with Madame Elizabeth, against whom he was closely pressed on account of the want of space. The carriage moved very slowly, although Dumas had succeeded in shaking off a portion of the escort, whom he had posted—on the pretext of checking the advance of de Bouillé's army—in a cool valley that intersected the road and followed the course of the Flageot behind Mareuil-le-Port. Here they bivouacked under the willows and lit fires and posted sentries, while the royal family, thus relieved of their convoy, were able to pursue their way towards Dormans with less fatigue than before.

The moon was rising in a clear sky. Madame Royale had fallen asleep on her aunt's knee, with her head resting against Pétion's shoulder. The latter was thus led into a most woeful error. The poor young man, who was accustomed to the middle-class prudery of Madame Pétion, and was now for the first time in contact with the great ones of the earth, was foolish enough to deceive himself in the matter of Madame Elizabeth's familiarity. In her eyes, we may be sure, this democrat, in so far as he was a man, had simply no existence: she thoughtlessly extended her arm then, and as he did not draw back his own, the two arms became interlaced. Pétion, who was a personable man and knew it, was convinced after this incident that the King's sister, struck by "a thunderbolt," felt for him the most tender of sentiments, which she did not take the trouble to hide.[1]

As for his self-deception, it is a misfortune that has happened to more than one little *bourgeois* who has strayed into society and has mistaken the disdainful unconstraint of fine ladies for indiscretion; but this misguided creature

[1] "Although Pétion could not have been ignorant of the distinguished virtue and extreme piety of Madame Elizabeth, he so far forgot himself as to make several questionable remarks to her, which would have been unseemly if addressed to any ordinary young woman who had been well brought up. Madame Elizabeth pretended not to hear these remarks, meeting them only with silence and contempt; but when Pétion had the temerity to make similar trivial jokes on the subject of piety and religion, Madame Elizabeth retorted with great force and energy."—Narrative of Fontanges, in the *Mémoires de Wéber*.

thought it necessary to record the story of his good fortune in writing, and in his account of the return from Varennes he has told the tale in thirty lines which have made him an object of ridicule for ever. The works of Pétion have been published in four volumes, which no one, however, has read or will ever read. Of all that he wrote, those thirty lines alone will survive, as a monument to his infatuation and simplicity.

And thus, while Barnave was talking to the Queen in a low voice, and Pétion was thinking himself beloved by the King's sister, and the children were asleep, and the King was dozing, the berline entered the brightly lighted town of Dormans, and passed along the principal street till it drew up at the farther end, before the Hôtel du Louvre, where the Commissioners had stopped in the afternoon. It was eleven o'clock at night, but the square before the town hall and all the roads that converged towards it were blocked with a roaring multitude. There was not one cry of "*Vive le Roi!*" but only an unceasing shout of "*Vive la Nation! Vive l'Assemblée Nationale!*" varied occasionally with "*Vive Barnave!*" and "*Vive Pétion!*" The berline drove into the yard of the hotel; the gates were then closed and the keys given to the Queen. Four men of the National Guard of Dormans were posted as sentinels for the night round the carriage.[1]

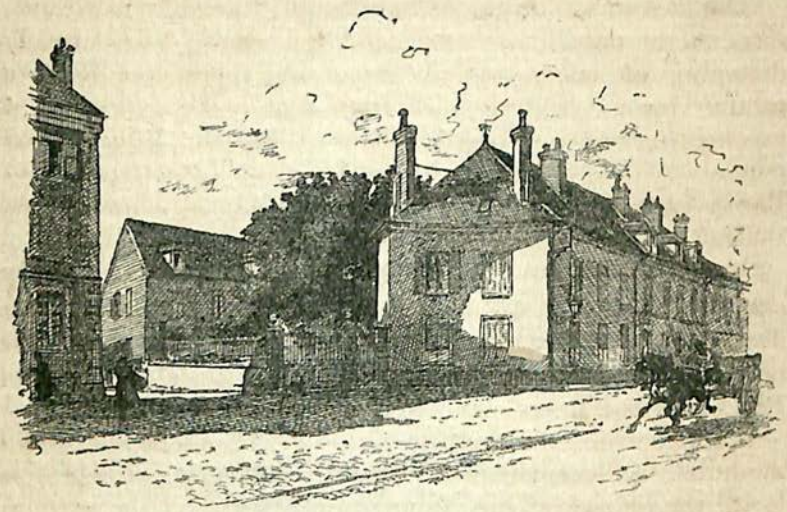
On the first story of the hotel a table had been laid for the King and his family. The Commissioners of the Assembly were invited by the King to share the meal, and Pétion had already seated himself unceremoniously beside the Queen[2] when Barnave modestly declined the honour that was offered to him. Pétion, therefore was obliged to rise from the table and go into another room to sup with his colleagues. The King sent them a bottle of his own Tokay.[3]

After supper, while the royal family were "making their preparations for the night," a waiter from a coffee-house, carrying refreshments, entered the room where they were. He saw "the King seated on a little wicker arm-chair in the middle of the room, the Queen sitting near the bed, against which she

[1] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*
[2] *Biographie universel*, article on Barnave.
[3] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*

was leaning, the Dauphin and Madame playing with Madame de Tourzel." The youth, without saying a word, handed his tray to Madame Elizabeth, who raised her eyes and recognised him. He was a young surgeon, named Jean Landrieux, "whom she had seen at Senart and at Maupertuis."

Jean explained that he was the son-in-law of the Mayor of Dormans, Jean-Baptiste Truet, to whom belonged the Hôtel



HOUSE, FORMERLY THE LOUVRE HOTEL, AT DORMANS.

du Louvre in which they were then staying, In concert with his father-in-law he had devised a plan of escape, and he entreated the Princess to put the matter before the King, who did not appear to be paying any attention to him. The scheme was quickly discussed, and hope once more revived. Jean expounded his plan. According to him, flight would be easy, since sentinels had only been posted at the door of the room, and that room, which was at the back of the house, had two windows opening on the terraced garden. From the garden a little flight of steps led to the river; and thus it was possible, without being seen, to reach a boat that had been provided to carry the King and his family across the Marne to Vincelles, where Truet had a wine-press. There a cart awaited them, "roomy, well padded, covered, and furnished

with three good horses." He himself, without any companion, would drive them rapidly to Fère-en-Tardenois, where they would change horses at the farm of a friend; a second relay would be found at the house of Forsy, Jean's brother-in-law, in L'Aisne; by daybreak they would be half way to the frontier, which, as the crow flies, is only twenty-two leagues from Dormans—five or six hours' work for good horses.

The idea was alluring. The attempt, though not without risks, might possibly succeed; and the women were already dreaming of safety, already imagining themselves to have escaped by a conjurer's trick from that howling army that was keeping watch outside the house. But the King refused point-blank, saying "that he depended on his good town of Paris; that he had only left it against his own judgment and under the influence of false representations."

The Queen, who was "leaning against the bed, rose quickly and made it plain to the King, with much temper," how deeply she felt the renunciation of this chance of safety. But he remained unshaken. He then prepared to rest, and Jean Landrieux left the room.[1]

Barnave and Pétion spent the night in one bed. Round the hotel, in the square, and in the neighbouring streets was heard the roaring of the tumultuous crowd,[2] for the population of the whole country had flocked to Dormans. The supply of food ran short, and a riot broke out, but was quickly quelled. The people drank and sang and danced country-dances, however, until daybreak; and the King only slept for three hours in an arm-chair without undressing. The shouts of "*Vive la Nation!*" and "*Vive l'Assemblée Nationale!*" which began with the daylight, made so deep an impression upon the Dauphin's mind that he dreamt he was in a wood with wolves, and that his mother was in danger. He awoke sobbing, and could only be soothed by being taken to the Queen's room. There he lay down again and slept peacefully until the time came to leave the hotel.[3]

[1] From the manuscripts of Jean Landrieux. See the Introduction to the *Mémoires de Jean Landrieux, chef-d'état-major à l'armée d'Italie*, by Léonce Grasilier.

[2] "All night it was impossible to close one's eyes because of the noise that was going on in the town."—Madame de Tourzel's Memoirs.

[3] Madame de Tourzel's Memoirs.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

At five o'clock on the morning of Friday the 24th of June Dumas and the three Commissioners held a review of the National Guards on the Paris road, where they were received with loud cheers; and before six o'clock, in sparkling sunshine, the royal family seated themselves in their berline.[1] This time Pétion sat on the back seat, between the King and Queen, while Barnave was in front, between Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel. The King, who had no doubt been prompted, made efforts at conversation. He asked if Pétion had any children, to which the deputy replied that he had a son a little older than the Dauphin. Then, since Pétion, in his character of Stoic philosopher, desired to lose no opportunity of giving a lesson to the monarch, he called upon his royal interlocutor to admire the lovely valley of the Marne, which lay below them in all its luxuriant beauty as they followed the road along the hillside.

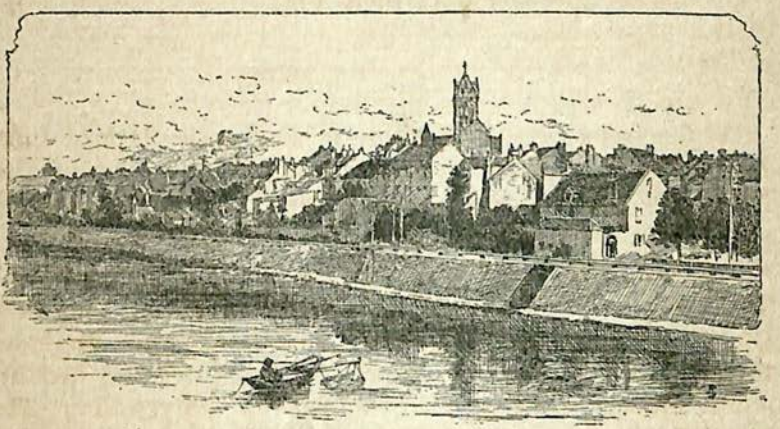
"What a fine country!" he said. "There is no kingdom in the world that can be compared to it!"

The allusion, however, was lost upon Louis XVI, who was absorbed in his Itinerary and his maps, referring to them with the greatest diligence, and remarking at intervals:

"We are now in such-and-such a department, in such-and-such a district, in such-and-such a place."

[1] "M. Truet, Mayor of Dormans in 1791, distinguished himself by paying his respects to the King, who gave him his hand to kiss, and by supplying the unhappy monarch on his way back from Varennes with a guard of honour for his protection."—*Essai sur Dormans*, by the Abbé Robech, 1814, founded on a manuscript in the Archives of Dormans.

His face, nevertheless, was frigid and expressionless "to a degree that was really deplorable," and, to speak plainly, "that mass of flesh appeared to have no feelings." He was paralysed, moreover, by his own awkwardness. There was one moment when he became natural, and spoke of the English and their industry; but after delivering himself of a few sentences he suddenly grew confused and reddened self-



DORMANS, SEEN FROM THE MARNE.

consciously. "Those who do not know him," observed Pétion, "might be tempted to mistake this timidity for stupidity, but they would be wrong. It is very seldom that he lets fall anything ill-timed, and I did not hear him make a single remark that was really silly."

The Queen, however, was quite companionable. She explained her system of education, nibbling chicken-legs the while, and throwing the bones out of the window; she "spoke as a mother and as a fairly well educated woman," insisting "that character was the important thing, and expressing a hope that she was credited with having some." By conversing in this way the travellers succeeded in ignoring the procession of armed men who surrounded and followed the carriage, though every attempt to lower the blinds had been greeted with murmurs of dissatisfaction from the mob, who liked to keep the royal family within sight. Every

moment faces were framed in the window, staring with hungry curiosity into every corner of the berline.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, after five leagues of travelling, they reached Château-Thierry. The crowd in the suburbs and about the approaches to the Pont de Marne was so great that they did not pause to change horses till they reached the Levée, a long double avenue of trees that borders the river and separates it from the huge triangular space of the Champ-de-Mars. On the previous day the municipal authorities had published a prohibition "to address any insult to the royal family," but nevertheless some rough voices were heard shouting, "Louis, Toinette! come, show your faces!" and while the carriage was at rest some of the people "amused themselves by making the Dauphin cry '*Vive la Nation!*' which the poor child did with a good grace."[1] These insults, however, were not altogether unprofitable to the captives, in that they had the effect of wringing excuses from the indignant Commissioners, and further, of securing freedom for one stage from the perspiring and heavy-footed escort. By Barnave's order the mounted National Guard, who had come from Soissons, barred the road[2] at the confines of Château-Thierry, and thus the berline and the cabriolet that followed it were able to set off at a smart trot,[3] surrounded only by a few horsemen who were acting as staff to General Mathieu Dumas. An hour and a half later they stopped at the Ferme de Paris, an isolated posting-house by the wayside. Vignon the postmaster was called upon to supply thirty-eight horses,[4] a fact which witnesses to the insignificance of the escort by which the berline was accompanied. Their journey was résumed without delay and at a good pace, the only village they had to pass before reaching La Ferté-sous-Jouarre being Montreuil-aux-Lions, which they drove through at full speed, leaving behind them rows of disappointed peasants who stood gaping in every lane.

[1] *Histoire du Château-Thierry*, by the Abbé C. Porquet, 1839.

[2] "We parted from the infantry, and only kept the mounted men near the King's person. By this means our progress was made much quicker, and was continued with the greatest success as far as Meaux."—Barnave's Report.

[3] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*

[4] *National Archives*, M. 664. In November 1791 Vignon had not succeeded in getting paid.

In the berline the conversation continued to be "free and even gay."[1] Pétion, in answering the King's questions, seized the opportunity of telling him "what was thought about the Court and all the schemers who frequented the palace." Then they spoke of the National Assembly, and of the right side and the left, "but with that perfect ease that is usual among friends." Louis XVI followed the conversation very intelligently, and Pétion reproached him for reading no papers but those that supported the aristocrats.

"I assure you," he answered, "I do not read *L'Ami du Roi* any more than Marat himself."[2]

Then he added with some curiosity:

"You are in favour of a Republic, are you not, M. Pétion?"

And Pétion, already a courtier, though he had only been breathing "the poisoned air of the Court" for twenty hours, answered:

"Sire, I was so in the Assembly; here, I feel that my opinion is changing."[3]

Marie Antoinette seemed to take the liveliest interest in this discussion; "she encouraged it and put life into it, making fairly shrewd reflections rather mischievously."[4] She tried to make Barnave express himself on the same subjects, but he, with much discretion, abstained from giving his opinion, and turned away his head.

"Pray tell M. Barnave," said the Queen laughingly to Pétion, "not to look out of the window so often when I ask him a question."[5]

At the entrance to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, which they reached at about two o'clock, they were obliged to drive slowly on account of the hill. Here a closely packed crowd awaited the berline, and as soon as it appeared burst out into shouts of "*Vive la Nation!*" "*Vive l'Assemblée!*" "*Vive Pétion!*" These cries, although intentionally insulting, did not affect the King in the least; but the Queen was obviously

[1] Toulongeon, *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution*, Vol. II., p. 38.
[2] *Voyage de Pétion.*
[3] Toulongeon, *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution.*
[4] *Voyage de Pétion.*
[5] Toulongeon, *Histoire de France depuis la Révolution.*

much wounded, and Madame Elizabeth even more so. As for the embarrassed deputies, they did not know how to apologise sufficiently for their popularity. In the Rue du Limon, the main thoroughfare of the town, the crowd, though great, was not hostile—indeed, it was almost respectful. The Mayor of La Ferté, Régnard de l'Isle, had begged the royal family, through a courier, to make a short halt at his house, which invitation the King had accepted. The berline, then, turned into the last street on the right before the bridge, where Régnard de l'Isle's house was approached by a handsome gateway. This house, then recently built, was comfortable and very large. It still exists, a little decrepit but yet well worth looking at, with its fine roofs of mossy slates, its high windows, and small panes of old glass, its two wings with the iron balconies overhanging the Marne, and between them a little terraced garden. The doors of the ground-floor open upon this garden, and it has a parapet that overlooks the river. On the side that faces the street there is a somewhat melancholy courtyard—much crowded on that particular day —and in the house an entrance-hall containing the charming staircase upon whose railing the Queen's hand rested. The large rooms on the first story had been set apart for the royal family to rest in, and while the women-of-the-bedchamber were there adjusting the Queen's very unpretentious toilet and Madame de Tourzel was washing the children, Barnave, Pétion, and La Tour-Maubourg took a stroll upon the terrace. It was a cool spot, at some distance from the prevailing uproar and sheltered from curious eyes. Moreover, it commanded a charming view: the green and limpid Marne against a background of tall, waving grasses, the houses of the Faubourg de Condets on the farther bank, and beyond them the hills of Jouarre.

Madame Elizabeth was the first to be ready, and joined the Commissioners on this terrace, where she conversed for some time with Pétion, of whom she had certainly made a conquest. "I should be much surprised," he writes, "if she had not a good and beautiful soul, though she is deeply imbued with the prejudices of her birth and spoilt by the vices of a Court education." The Queen soon appeared, and walked a little with

Barnave; then the King came down the steps, looking extremely homely in his dirty shirt and the shaggy brown coat he had travelled in, and, going up to the deputies, asked them unceremoniously if they would give him the pleasure of their company at dinner.

On the bridge and on the right bank of the river a large crowd had gathered, and were watching from the distance while this scene of the historic drama was being played out in the little garden; the various individuals were hardly distinguishable, but it was easy to recognise the children, who were amusing themselves by running about while they were waiting for dinner. The table of the royal family was laid in one of the rooms on the ground-floor, but the deputies, having declined the King's invitation in the fear of appearing "suspects,"[1] begged that they might have their meal in another room. The dinners were "splendid," according to Pétion;[2] "simple, but nicely served," if one is to believe Madame de Tourzel. A detail worthy of record is the behaviour of Madame Régnard de l'Isle, who, although invited by the King, would not consent to sit down at the royal table,[3] but, wearing her best housewifely cap, and her bunch of keys hanging from the band of her apron,[4] supervised everything, gave directions to her servants, and herself[5] waited upon the Queen, standing behind her chair until the dinner was at an end. After the meal, when the party were again upon the terrace, M. Régnard de l'Isle went up to Barnave.

[1] "We had a consultation, MM. Maubourg, Barnave, and I, as to whether we should accept. This intimacy, said one of us, might look suspicious. As it is not in accordance with etiquette, it might be thought that it was because of his unfortunate position that he had invited us. We agreed to decline, and we sent a message to him that we were obliged to retire on account of our correspondence, which would prevent us from accepting the honour he did us."—*Voyage de Pétion.* [2] *Mémoires.*

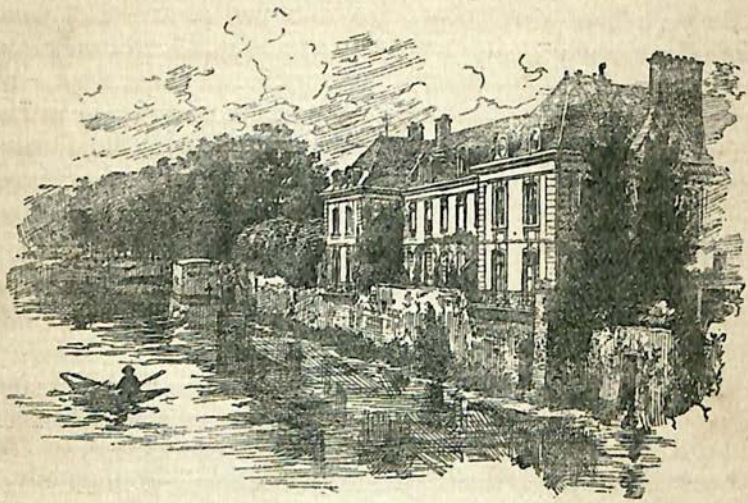
[3] ". . . The Queen only saw standing near her a woman whose modesty of bearing, added to the simplicity of the costume she had assumed, gave her the appearance of wishing rather to ask for orders than to give them, and the Queen asked where the mistress of the house was. 'The moment the King and the Queen honour a house by entering it, they alone are its master and mistress,' answered the good woman instantly."—*Histoire de l'Événement de Varennes*, by the Comte de Sèze, 1843.

[4] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*

[5] "The wife of the Mayor, being unwilling from a feeling of delicacy to eat with the royal family, dressed herself like a cook and waited upon them with equal zeal and respect."—Madame de Tourzel's Memoirs.

"If you will allow it," he said, "the people will shout '*Vive le Roi!*'"[1]

At five o'clock Dumas ordered the horses to be harnessed and gave the signal for the start. As soon as the berline appeared round the corner of the street and was about to turn on to the bridge the line formed by the national guards was broken by the sudden surging of the mob, among whom



RÉGNARD DE L'ISLE'S HOUSE AT FERTÉ-SOUS-JOUARRE.

were some Parisians whose rage and curiosity had brought them thither. In the confusion the pressure of the crowd upon the carriage was so great that the Queen could not repress a movement of fear. The Dauphin screamed, whereupon a man who was evidently much excited pushed through the throng and cried insultingly:

"Here's a fine to-do over a brute of a woman like that!"

Pétion put his head out, and recognised Kervélégan, a Breton deputy, who walked beside the carriage for a time, talking to his colleagues with an air of great importance.

"Are they all there? Be careful, for there is still some

[1] J. S. Cazotte, *Témoignage d'un royaliste.*

talk of carrying them off. The people you are with are an impudent lot!"

"What a very unmannerly person!" said the Queen, turning her head away.

This was the only incident of the journey to Saint-Jean-des-deux-Jumeaux, the next posting-place, where three days earlier the fugitives had changed horses in the early morning, full of hope.

Between here and Meaux, the first houses of which were reached at about eight o'clock in the evening, the perfectly straight road was lined with spectators on both sides. In Trilport and other villages the inhabitants had set up tables before the houses, and spread them with slices of bread and pitchers of wine, beer, and water.[1] By the time the procession had passed there was nothing left. In the tumult that greeted the prisoners the Parisian element was already mingled—blustering and riotous, with a note of unbridled licence—and all along the Faubourg Saint-Nicolas their reception was one unvarying fire of uproarious sneers and insults.

The berline progressed slowly and spasmodically, being subject to frequent stoppages. Overhead was a leaden sky[2] and a stifling, stormy atmosphere; the narrow streets of the old town were blocked with a struggling mass of humanity; the escort was broken up and overpowered and scattered; and thus it was at the mercy of the popular fury with all its dangers and caprices that the royal family, as night fell, reached the Place Sainte Étienne and the precincts of the cathedral, beset by yells and threats. Here the local national guards were assembled, together with a battalion of the Parisian guard, which had arrived during the day.[3]

The carriage drove into the courtyard of the *évêché* and drew up at the foot of the massive and austere square tower that projects from the façade of Bossuet's palace. At the windows, in the yards, on the copings of the walls, in the covered alleys of the garden and the archways of the precentory—everywhere, indeed—there were national guards;

[1] *Compte rendu* by Bodan.
[2] *See* Modeste, *Le passage de Louis XVI à Meaux.*
[3] *See* Modeste, *Le passage de Louis XVI.*

they could be seen leaning against the dormer windows on the roofs, poised on the chimney-tops, and clinging to the crumbling sculptures of the cathedral, whose great shadowy form loomed dimly in the twilight, magnificent and grey——the yellowish-grey of the old churches of La Brie. The low door that serves as entrance to the palace leads to an inclined plane of brickwork, whose very steep slope takes the

THE BISHOP'S PALACE AT MEAUX.

place of a staircase.[1] Up this slope the travellers dragged themselves wearily, through the torchlit desolation of the bare, undecorated house, to the rooms that had been hastily prepared for the King and his suite.

For the episcopal palace had been unfurnished since the departure of Monseigneur de Polignac, who had been recently

[1] "As she alighted from the carriage Madame de Tourzel fainted, being worn out with fatigue. She was carried into the porter's lodge of the Bishop's Palace."—Madame de Tourzel's Memoirs.

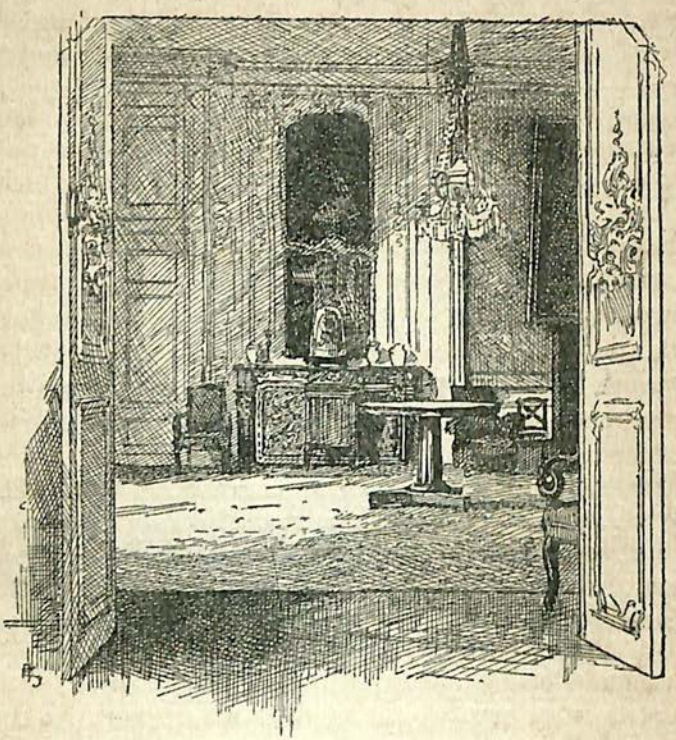
replaced by a constitutional bishop called Monseigneur Thuin. In all this great palace the latter only occupied one very poorly furnished room, and when the news of the King's approach reached the place there was no resource but to fly to the Ursuline convent, where Monseigneur de Polignac had temporarily stored his furniture. Thence two beds were brought for the King and Queen, while other beds and bedding were lent by obliging people of the town, and thus, by one means and another, a kind of accommodation was prepared.

The first story of the palace was not then, as it is now divided into several salons; it was composed of a very long hall, devoted to the use of the cathedral chapter, beyond which there was a single suite of three large rooms. The first of these, it is said, was Bossuet's drawing-room; another, which contained an alcove, had two high windows overlooking the garden, and this was assigned to the Queen; while the third, in which the King was to sleep, communicated with both the others. The first of these rooms served as a common antechamber to the other two.

When the royal family entered the chapter-hall, half-way along which they had to walk to reach their own rooms, they found that enormous apartment thronged with a crowd of officers of every rank, of municipal magnates, of delegates of the Parisian guard, not to mention that inquisitive type of person who by dint of intriguing and pushing succeeds in penetrating everywhere that there is a sight to be seen. In the salon beyond this room, where three beds had been set up for the bodyguards, a table was already laid for supper. The Queen, with her daughter and Madame Elizabeth, shut herself into her room, while the King took possession of his with the Dauphin, and immediately began to make a deliberate examination of its arrangements. He opened a little door that was concealed in the tapestry, and, seeing a secret staircase, inquired where it led to, and asked that a sentinel might be posted there. Then he undressed, and sat down in an armchair in his shirt. As the heat was very great and he suffered much from it, he had asked that all the doors might be left open; and thus the interested spectators who were packed

into the great hall and kept within bounds by two sentries were able to see him in this simple costume, perfectly indifferent to all the eyes that were fixed upon him.[1]

At nine o'clock supper was announced. The poor constitutional bishop having found it quite impossible to make the



LOUIS XVI'S ROOM IN THE BISHOP'S PALACE AT MEAUX.

smallest contribution towards the plenishing of the table, it had been necessary to appeal to the kindliness of the inhabitants of Meaux. Some of the glass and linen had been borrowed from the posting-house near the palace, while the meal itself had been ordered from Levallois, the first cook in the town. The menu was perhaps more imposing than delicate. Its details have been preserved.

[1] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*

Soup.

Veal cutlets, iced; chickens dressed *à la Tartare;* stewed eels; mackerels *à la maître d'hôtel.*

Roast chickens and home-fed pigeons; young rabbits.

Two salads; artichokes with sauce; fried artichokes; two dishes of peas.

Two creams *à l'anglaise*; two little apricot cakes; four bowls of strawberries; four plates of sugar; two plates of cherries; two plates of biscuits and macaroons.[1]

During this supper, which was short and quickly served, an ever-increasing crowd had been pouring into the palace, filling not only the rooms, but also the corridors, the inclined way, and the garden—that austere garden of Bossuet's, planted with box and designed in the shape of a mitre—and even the precincts, the square, and the streets. And all through the night the country population crowded in constantly growing numbers round the closed gates of the town, encamping in the ditches, or at the feet of the venerable towers, or on the old ramparts, while the muffled clamour that arose from that great mass of men penetrated to the empty echoing rooms where the King and Queen were passing a wakeful night.[2]

The King was in great discomfort from the heat, and having, contrary to his custom, eaten very little supper, he retired early. The Queen was uneasy as to the events of the morrow, and repeatedly inquired about the state of Paris. The Commissioners, having "eaten a morsel" in a room by themselves, were preparing their despatches when the Queen sent for M. Barnave. There is a tradition that she walked with him in the garden of the palace, and told him of her fears with regard to the bodyguards. These unfortunate men had been enduring a ceaseless martyrdom for three days. It is hard to see why the populace should have regarded these retainers as the instigators of the flight. Perhaps it had been whispered to them that one of these yellow liveries that were so greatly scorned and vilified formed a disguise—as Barnave had believed—for the Comte de Fersen, the

[1] *See* Modeste, *Le passage de Louis XVI.* All this food only cost 76 *livres* 10 *sols.*

[2] *Le passage de Louis XVI.*

Queen's familiar, the foreigner, upon whom in the general opinion all the responsibility lay, and against whom in consequence all the wrath of the people was directed. Or was it that the popular fury was still timid, and vented itself upon these three men because it dared not directly attack the majesty of royalty? Whatever the reason may have been, these men since leaving Varennes had on several occasions looked death in the face; and notably on the previous day between Dormans and Château-Thierry, when the crowd had flung itself upon them with the design of "binding them to the front wheels of the carriage" and crushing them beneath the moving vehicle. The horses had actually been stopped by some of these fanatics, and Barnave had been obliged to leave the carriage and exert all the authority of his office to induce the monsters to give up their horrible intention.[1]

It was feared, then, that the entry into Paris, which threatened to be dangerous, might have serious results for these three men. Valory, whose legendary *Historical Summary* should only be consulted with the greatest discretion, records a moving speech in the style of Livy as having been declaimed by the King at this juncture: "Witnesses and companions of our misfortunes, you are also our partners in its pains. . . ." If we are to believe Valory, Pétion suggested disguising the three guards and helping them to escape, on the pretext of saving them from the wrath of Paris, but really "with the secret design of having them privately assassinated." It is probable that after supper the Commissioners of the Assembly and General Mathieu Dumas joined the royal family, and that they discussed the programme for the morrow. It seeems certain that the Queen insisted that the guards should not discard their uniform. "The King," she said, "must enter Paris with his family and attendants as he left it."[2] Pétion does not mention this consultation, in which perhaps he took no part.

By five o'clock on Saturday the 25th of June everyone in the episcopal palace of Meaux was afoot. The King, as he

[1] *Précis historique du Comte Valory.*
[2] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.*

made his toilet, was so much impressed by the dirtiness of his linen that he borrowed a shirt from one of ushers of the Assembly.

A dish of eggs was placed before the royal family, with cream, sugar, and rolls. The postmaster was called upon to supply twenty-four horses: eleven for the King's two carriages, eight for two carriages that followed them, and two riding horses, one for an officer on duty, and the other for La Tour-Maubourg, who did not care to make his entry into Paris in the cabriolet with the women-of-the-bedchamber.[1] Finally, three horses were harnessed to the wagon in which the triumphant Varennois were crowded.[2] As for Mathieu Dumas, he took possession for the day of the fine horse *L'Argentin*, which had been left at Meaux[3] four days earlier by the officer called de Briges. By six o'clock the cavalcade had started, under a burning, cloudless sky, in a temperature of sixty-eight degrees, which gave promise of an oppressive day. The procession, even as it left the palace gate, encountered a crowd so dense that it seemed impenetrable; it gave way, however, with a good deal of screaming, before the horses' heels, for the berline was surrounded by a detachment of mounted national guards from Paris.[4] Pétion took his original place between Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel, on whose knee Madame Royale sat almost continuously. On the back seat, between the King and Queen, sat Barnave, with the Dauphin standing between his knees. On the box the three bodyguards, to whom the narrow bracket-seat gave but scanty accommodation, were, in common with the horses, the carriage, and the escort themselves, covered with the dust that rose under the horses' hoofs and the trampling of the crowd and whirled into the berline in suffocating clouds.

The King, who was "quite as phlegmatic and calm as though nothing had been going forward," kept a decanter of orangeade beside him in the carriage, and from time to time poured out a bumper. He gave the glass to Pétion, and

[1] *Nouvelle Revue*, May 15, 1903, *Louis XVI à Varennes.*
[2] *National Archives*, M. 664.
[3] *Souvenirs de Mathieu Dumas.* [4] *Mémoires de Pétion.*

graciously filled it with his own hands. By this time Pétion had become quite familiar and at his ease; he allowed the King to pour out some wine for him, and "tapped the glass against the bottle" by way of thanks and as an indication that there was enough in the glass. He ate heartily, gnawing the bones of a chicken to the last morsel, and throwing the remains carelessly out of the window, under the noses of his fellow-travellers.[1]

At ten o'clock they descended the steep hill that leads into Claye, where they changed horses. As soon as they had passed this little town, and were once more travelling at a foot's pace through the crowd on the dusty road, the carriage was again besieged by the rabble, who were now more excited and riotous than ever. For Paris was like a boiling, seething sea, and the outer fringe of its foam was apparent even here. The wrath of the populace became more visible at every turn of the wheels, and a feeling of foreboding invested this slow march towards the immense, excited city, whose menace could be felt from afar with a sense of tragic solemnity.

Having passed Villeparisis, the procession reached the wood of Bondy at about mid-day. A second detachment of the Parisian mounted guard was posted at the edge of the forest, and these horsemen tried to force a passage for themselves to the berline. The grenadiers would not give up their place to them, however, and the result was a lively scene. Swords were drawn and bayonets brought to the charge; and in the midst of this disorder among the guards a horde of half-frenzied ruffians darted from the thicket, and with ferocious cries rushed forward to attack the carriage. Dishevelled and half-drunken women—the Megaeras of the memorable days of October—actually scrambled beneath the horses in order to approach the Queen and fling their ribald insults in her face.

"It's all very well for her to show us her child, but everyone knows fat Louis is not its father!"

The King heard this remark quite plainly. The Dauphin, taking fright at the noise, the clashing of arms, and the

[1] *Mémoires de Madame Campan.*

horrible faces, began to scream, and his mother took him in her arms. Pétion saw tears on the cheeks of the Queen.

At three o'clock they reached Pantin, where there was a short halt. Lafayette was waiting there with his staff, and in the street on the right side of the village a great crowd stood under the merciless sun, in perfect silence. Such were the orders from Paris—not a sound, and heads covered. From time to time, however, when Pétion's face or Barnave's appeared at the window of the carriage, there was a sudden outburst of "*Vive la Nation!*" quickly repressed by an authoritative *hush!* When the carriages resumed their journey they seemed to be carrying with them the population of a whole province. In the fields, as far as eye could see, there was a moving mass of heads; on the wide road an army was marching as though to a funeral; from the distance, before and behind, came sounds of the beating of drums, and of cries and songs; but in the actual track of the fugitives not a voice was heard, not a hat was raised. There was much hustling, however, and trampling of feet, and many eager eyes trying with desperate curiosity to see the King's demeanour, and more especially that of the Queen, who was hardly visible among the patriots who were weighing down the berline—some aloft upon the roof among the luggage, some sitting on the mud-guards, others clinging behind the box or perched upon the springs, or indeed anywhere that there was room to clutch with a hand or to find a foothold. Two grenadiers clung to the box in some mysterious fashion, to serve as a protection to the bodyguards; and under this living carapace, which threatened to collapse at every jolt, the royal carriage slowly made its way through a mob that grew ever denser and more violent as it approached the barrier.

The menacing attitude of the people, and the way in which the humiliated royal family were forced to face the city of Paris, have often been described. Louis Blanc especially, with the help of contemporary journals, has drawn a graphic picture to which nothing can be added: the enormous circuit that the carriage was forced to make round the walls of the town from the barrier of La Villette to that of Neuilly; the review of the procession by Lafayette and his staff before the

guard-house of the barrier of Monceau, where the King, to put some heart into himself, asked for a large glass of wine and drank it in one gulp; the progress through the Champs-Élysées, where the national guards who lined the road presented arms with muskets reversed as at a funeral; then the crossing of the square, black with people and silent as a desert.

But less has been told of the events that were taking place in the Assembly while the royal family were enduring this fearful crucifixion. The permanent sitting that had begun on Tuesday the 21st was still in progress; on this Saturday, the 25th, it had been suspended at one o'clock and resumed at seven in the morning. The first few hours had been occupied by the reading of the despatches that had arrived from every corner of the kingdom—protestations of devotion to the Assembly, and descriptions of the emotions experienced by the municipalities of the east and north on hearing the news of the King's flight. Each of these communications was warmly applauded, and one of the couriers was even summoned to the bar. This good man, the bearer of some despatches from Verdun, described without any sign of timidity or awkwardness the astonishing sight that he had witnessed.

"Towards Bar, Verdun, and Nancy," he said, "there are more than eight hundred thousand men on the road. . . . I should have arrived yesterday evening if it had not been that the multitude of patriots on the road made it impossible to pass." The Assembly had sworn to keep calm, but these echoes of the agitation that was shaking the whole country, and the seething impatience of its surroundings in Paris, combined to upset its serenity. This atmosphere of rage and enthusiasm and anxiety gradually robbed the Assembly of the coolness to which it aspired, and brought its temperature up to that of the outside world. Every moment was bringing the fugitive King nearer to the capital, and the deputies being for the moment masters of the situation, seized the opportunity to take advantage over their adversary. At about ten o'clock in the morning Voidel, in the name of the Committee of Inquiries, proposed that before the return

MARIE ANTOINETTE.
From the Portrait by Vigée le Brun.

of the royal family all papers found in the Tuileries should be sealed up, and this motion was carried. Thouret, in the name of the Constitutional Committee, brought forward a more subversive scheme: "On the King's arrival at the palace a guard shall be appointed, who shall be responsible for his person. The Queen and the heir presumptive to the throne shall be subjected to similar supervision." On this suggestion of placing the King under arrest a bitter and noisy discussion followed; but in spite of a fine speech from Malouet opposing the motion, the Left carried the day against the constitutionalists. The decree was passed with the addition of a fifth article enjoining upon the Minister of Justice to "affix the State seals to the decrees of the Assembly without there being any necessity for the King's sanction or acceptance." This amounted to a suspension of the royal authority, and indeed almost to a deposition; and the triumphant progressives took care that the news should be instantly proclaimed to the sound of the trumpet in every quarter of Paris. The way was now clear for revolutionary measures, and a motion was carried, though not without discussion, for the conversion into coin of the bells belonging to the suppressed churches. After this the payment of pensions was brought forward, but the general feeling of uneasiness and agitation was growing. The whole population was at this moment gathered round the Tuileries and the Champs-Élysées, waiting for the King's return, which had been announced for six o'clock, and the roar of voices that rose from the crowd was audible in the Riding School. The sitting was suspended at three o'clock and resumed at five. The watchword of the Assembly was, "Be calm, be calm!" for their ambition was to show the world how sublimely indifferent they were to everything that was not included in their parliamentary duty; and it was understood that while the King was arriving at the Tuileries the discussion should continue according to the order of the day.

After the reading of some despatches from Metz and Strasbourg, then M. Bureaux de Pusy mounted the platform to bring forward the scheme of the Military Committee with regard to fortified places. But the pulse of the Assembly was

beating feverishly. Every minute news from without was brought into the hall by casual informants: the royal procession had appeared on the rising ground of L'Étoile; now it was going down the Champs-Élysées; it had reached the Place Louis XV; it was entering the garden of the Tuileries, and all the time M. Bureaux de Pusy went on imperturbably reading his report, to which no doubt very few listened. A good many of the deputies had left their seats and had repaired to the terrace of Les Feuillants to watch the King's progress;[1] and suddenly one of these came running back to the hall, crying out:

"Monsieur le Président, there is a riot at the Tuileries . . . some commissioners must be chosen to go there!"

In a moment the mask of indifference was flung aside; the

[1] "A certain number of the deputies left the hall to see the procession; M. d'Orléans was seen to be among them, which seemed, to say the least of it, inconsiderate."—*Mémoires de Pétion.*

This was the scene of the story that M. de Guilhermy, one of the deputies, who was the hero of the tale, told later on in the following words to his cousin, M. de Laborde: ". . . . They brought this unfortunate prince through the garden of the Tuileries, and made him go up the central road. . . . I was opposite our assembly hall, below the Allée des Feuillants, in great distress, and was talking to several of my colleagues who were seated behind a heap of piled-up chairs. I was standing in front of them, holding my hat in my hand. As the coach appeared, with the King, the Queen, Monseigneur le Dauphin, Madame Elizabeth, Madame, Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the children of France, etc., all crowded into it, a swarm of national guards came rushing about the garden; one of them came up to me, shouting out to me at the top of his voice to put on my hat, because Louis Capet and his family were passing. At that moment I was not in a very compliant humour. I looked at him contemptuously, and answered that that was a reason for remaining uncovered. The soldier ran at me, threatening me with his bayonet and trying to seize me by the collar. . . . The violence with which I repulsed him was increased twofold by the feelings that overwhelmed me, and he fell on his back. In a moment two or three dozen of the rascals fell upon me, hustling me and pulling me about. While I was struggling with them I flung away my hat, defying them to make me put it on—he may bring it back to me who dares! My friends made vain efforts to help me, and some of these men in uniform said, lowering their voices, 'It is a deputy, we must leave him alone,' while others cried out, 'It is a deputy on the 'black' side, we must cut him to pieces!' While this hubbub was going on one of the most notorious blackguards in the Assembly came by; he dashed in among them, and ordered them to leave me alone, on the grounds of my inviolability. . . . The *canaille* obeyed. . . In that moment of exaltation, if all the big guns in Paris had been pointed at me they would not have made me put on my hat, and unless it had been nailed upon my head it would not have stayed there. I was young then, but now that I am old I do not think that, on a similar occasion, I should be any more amenable or docile."—*Gazette de France*, January 22, 1903.

whole hall was in commotion. "Yes, yes! Choose some commissioners! Be quick, M. le Président, be quick!" Amid the uproar Beauharnais, who was again in the President's chair, nominated six men: Dupont, Noailles, Menou, Coroller, the Abbé Grégoire, and Le Couteulx, who were cheered as they left the hall. Everyone, members and audience alike, prepared to follow them, moving excitedly to and fro; but Beauharnais, with the decision of a leader of men, recalled the deputies to their seats with a word.

"It is with the greatest respect," he said, "that I remind the Assembly of the absolute necessity for calmness. I impose profound silence upon the public; it is for the members of this Assembly to give them an example."

These words had a strange effect. M. Bureaux de Pusy placidly resumed the reading of his report on fortified places and military stations, while every heart was beating, and every voice choked with anxiety, and every ear straining to catch the sound of the distant thunder that rose from the besieged garden.

The six commissioners, pushing their way through the crowd, ran to the entrance of the palace, which they reached precisely as the royal berline drew up before it. This was the critical moment: the mob, bloodthirsty as a pack of hounds, flung out their arms in their eagerness to seize and kill the three bodyguards, who were still seated on the box. They were threatened with bayonets, bare swords, pikes, and clenched fists. "*À mort les gardes, à mort!*" The three wide steps[1] that it was necessary to ascend before reaching the shelter of the central doorway of the Pavillon de l'Horloge were invaded by the furious, unruly crowd; the National Guard was borne down and its lines broken, disordered, and overpowered. In Mathieu Dumas's efforts to restore order his hat was lost, his sash and the scabbard of his sword were dragged off, his clothes were torn. So violent was the mob that it seemed as though the whole vast sea of people that had overspread the road from Varennes were accumulated here in a tempestuous mass, and were dashing itself against the walls of the palace. The first of the bodyguards, Moustier, staggered

[1] *Mémoires de Weber.*

and fell. He disappeared, dragged hither and thither in the turmoil—was seized, wounded, and finally pushed bleeding into the vestibule, where he was cared for by one of the Queen's Hungarian retainers, named Bercq.[1] The second guard, Malden, was more fortunate, and succeeded, in spite of blows, in reaching the palace without any wounds. Lafayette had rallied the guards and re-formed them into line. Then the deputies appeared, and the sight of them had the effect of somewhat calming the crowd. The third guard was hurried into the palace, struggling and yelling with rage.[2] Then suddenly silence fell. The door of the carriage opened, the King appeared, stepped out deliberately, and mounted the steps. Not a sound was heard. But as the Queen emerged from the narrow doorway a low murmur arose from the crowd, whereupon M. de Noailles hurried to her side and escorted her into the palace, while the other deputies gathered round her. A few cries were heard, but were quickly suppressed. As the Dauphin and his sister passed they were cheered. "There goes the hope and mainstay of the French!" Then Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel were led into the palace by Barnave and La Tour-Maubourg, and the grating of the peristyle fell.[3] It was seven o'clock in the evening.[4]

The King and Queen now mounted the two flights of the great stone staircase that led to their rooms. All the valets were there in attendance, at their proper posts and in their usual garments. The royal family might have been returning from a drive or a hunting expedition. Louis XVI smilingly passed through the antechambers to his own rooms, followed by the Queen, Madame Elizabeth, the six deputies despatched by the Assembly, Barnave, La Tour-Maubourg, and Pétion. The last named, who was half dead with fatigue, overcome with heat, and gasping with thirst, asked Madame Elizabeth to order a drink for him. The kindly Princess saw to the

[1] Moustier's *Précis.* [2] Weber's Memoirs.

[3] *Nouvelle Revue* of May 15, 1903. *Louis XVI à Varennes.*

[4] "The gate was already closed, and I was a good deal knocked about before I could get in. A guard took me by the collar and was on the point of striking me, not knowing who I was, when someone suddenly stopped him and mentioned my name; he made me a thousand apologies."—*Mémoires de Pétion.*

matter without delay, and some beer was brought in. It was altogether a homely scene. The King was placidly performing his toilet when Deputy Coroller went up to him and began to scold him quite paternally. "Yes, indeed, that was a nice prank for you to play! That is what comes of having bad advisers." Then, relenting, he went on peevishly, "You are good, you are beloved . . . . but just see what a scrape you have got yourself into!"[1]

This remark was greeted with smiles; but suddenly the Queen uttered a cry: her boy was not in the room. "Do they want to separate him from her? Has he been smothered in the crowd?"[2] She left him in the carriage, and had not seen him since. There was a minute of fearful suspense while inquiries were hastily made, but the Queen was soon reassured. Two deputies, Duport and Montmorency, had carried the exhausted child to his room and placed him in the hands of his attendants.[3] The Queen grew calm again, and approaching Lafayette, handed over to him, not without some affectation of contempt, the keys of the boxes that were still in the carriage. Lafayette deprecatingly declined to take them, protesting that "no one dreamt of opening the boxes"; whereupon the Queen threw the keys on to the hat which the commandant-general, as he stood respectfully before her, was holding against his chest. And there he left them, apologising for "the trouble that it would give her Majesty to take them back, since, as for him, he would not touch them." "Oh," she said crossly, "I can find plenty of people less scrupulous than you!"[4]

[1] Barnave's Report to the Assembly.

[2] Weber's Memoirs.

[3] "The deputies de Dupont [*sic*] and Montmorency carried this august little sprig of royalty. The lovely child looked about him with eyes full of uneasiness, seeking his parents, and seemed to be asking, 'Why have you parted me from my father and mother? Why do you call me the mainstay of France and the hope of the French? Why these cheers for me, and this silence for my father?'"—*Louis XVI à Varennes*, *Nouvelle Revue*, May 15, 1903.

[4] *Mémoires de Lafayette.* Statement of Joseph Guillaume Lescuyer, captain and adjutant of the 6th battalion of the 3rd division, resident in the Faubourg Saint-Denis: "On the 25th he was ordered to form part of the King's guard; he was placed during the march close to the King's carriage door. After he had been marching for some time the King called him by name and said to him in a loud voice, 'M. Lescuyer, here are the

The King retired to his study and wrote some letters, which, so docile a prisoner was he already, he ordered his valet to show to the general before despatching them. Lafayette lost his temper. He thought it "very ill-natured" to make a spy of him in this way, and then, preparing to retire, he asked for his Majesty's orders. "It seems to me," said Louis XVI, laughing, "that I am more at your orders than you are at mine." The three Commissioners of the Assembly, on being consulted, went further. It was the place of the commandant-general, they said, to undertake the surveillance of the palace and to arrest the three bodyguards, as well as Madame Brunier and Madame Neuville. As for Madame de Tourzel, it was possible to keep an eye on her in her own rooms. Pétion, Barnave, and La Tour-Maubourg took their departure at last, at about half past eight, and returned to the Riding School, where the endless sitting was still going on. The Assembly was reassured as to the reinstatement of the fugitives in their "prison," but was awaiting the return of the Commissioners. As the latter entered there was an outburst of applause, and Barnave, mounting the platform, began to speak. He could hardly be heard, and protestations broke out noisily. He raised his hand.

"You will forgive me, perhaps," he said in a broken voice, "when you learn that since we left the Assembly we have not had a single moment's rest."

Then a profound silence fell upon the hall, while Barnave told the story of the Commissioners' departure, the incidents of the journey, the meeting with the royal family, the details of the return, the difficulties of the march after leaving Meaux, the necessity for "stopping the procession every quarter of an hour, by reason of the number of citizens on the road," and finally the arrival at the Tuileries and the placing of the royal family under surveillance.

There was little solemnity about the Epilogue. On the

keys of my carriage; after I leave it, lock it, and return the keys to me.' Lescuyer answered that he would carry out the order. When they reached the Champs-Elysées the King asked him to return the keys, which were three in number; he returned them instantly."—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37.

morrow, the 26th, three fresh delegates from the Assembly presented themselves at half-past six in the evening at the Tuileries, not to *examine* the King, but to hear his statement and that of the Queen touching the facts that had prompted them to leave Paris, and the circumstances of their flight. They found the King alone in his room. He read them a short memorial of no significance, in which he renewed his protestations that he had not at all intended to leave the kingdom. When they had heard this, and had signed a copy of it in his presence, they expressed a wish to see the Queen, whose statement they also wished to hear. At this moment Madame Elizabeth appeared.

"Elizabeth," said the King, "go, please, and see if the Queen can receive these gentlemen, and do not let her keep them waiting."[1]

The Princess obeyed, and returned almost at once with the information that the Queen "had just got into her bath."[2] Louis XVI begged his sister to go back "and find out if it would take long." The delegates—they were Duport, Tronchet, and d'André—respectfully begged that the Queen would herself suggest an hour for the interview, and she sent a message to the effect that she would receive them on the following morning at eleven o'clock.

She awaited them in her room, and, offering them arm-chairs, sat on a high chair herself,[3] an ironical subversion of etiquette which was severely interpreted. Neither did the Queen's statement meet with approval, and indeed it was meaningless enough. When it was read to the Assembly it was greeted with murmurs of dissatisfaction,[4] and the general public were no more indulgent. "Is it possible to tell lies to such a point?" they said.[5]

The King was already forgiven, but the feeling of resent-

[1] Toulongeon, *Histoire de la Révolution.*

[2] ". . . Two days later we received a letter from the Queen, written from her dictation by one of her ushers, of whose devotion and discretion she was sure. It contained these words: 'I am having this letter written to you from my bath. I have just got into it, in order at least to revive my physical energies . . . etc.'"—*Mémoires de Madame Campan.*

[3] *Mémoires de Lafayette.*

[4] Parliamentary Archives, June 27, 1791, p. 553.

[5] *Nouvelle Revue*, May 15, 1903, *Louis XVI à Varennes.*

ment against *the Austrian* was implacable. She knew it well. When she rose from her bed on the following day, and one of her women-of-the-bedchamber thinking she was looking well could not refrain from saying so, she removed her night-cap. Her hair had turned quite white, "like the hair of a woman of seventy."[1]

[1] *Mémoires de Madame Campan.*

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CHAPTER IX

THE CASE OF MONSIEUR LÉONARD

To die twice is not a commonplace occurrence, and although there are many instances in our history of men who have been forgotten and have reappeared, of lost children who have been found, and of apparently dead people who have recovered, it must be extremely rarely that a man's name appears twice over in the same death register without there being any substitution or error, or—strangest of all—any subsequent revision. Yet this is what happened to a certain personage who at the time when *Le Mariage de Figaro* was at the height of its popularity figured in the dreams of all the fine ladies of Marie Antoinette's Court. This hero of the boudoir was named Jean François Autié, *alias* Léonard, and was by profession a barber. He was at that time approaching his thirtieth year, having been born in 1758. If this were the end, instead of the beginning of his story, it would be unnecessary to say that he was a native of Pamiers,[1] for adventures of this kind only happen to Gascons.

I do not profess to know anything at all of existing conditions in the hairdressing world, but I find it hard to believe that there is in Paris at the present day any artist whose vogue can be compared to that enjoyed in 1785 by *le marquis* Léonard, as he was nicknamed by the Comte de Provence to distinguish him from his brother the *chevalier*, whose office was confined to the cutting of hair. Everyone has seen prints—by no means rare—in the windows of the booksellers on the Quai, representing the gigantic head-

[1] *National Archives*, W. 432.

dresses that women wore in the time of Louis XVI, measuring two feet in height, adorned with a heterogeneous collection of accessories and supported by a framework of steel wire. All these Léonard created. He gave them ridiculous names which the women thought enchanting; *poufs*, *toquets en lubie*, *valgalas*. There was even, when the Dauphin was vaccinated, a head-dress *à l'inoculation*, which the austere Mercy described in a letter to the Empress Maria Theresa, much to her amazement. It included "a serpent, a club, a rising sun, and an olive tree," by which we may see plainly that there is no originality in the symbolists of our days.

If Léonard was not a perfect imbecile, with neither refinement nor taste, he must certainly have been a profound philosopher, and have spent hours of exquisite enjoyment in observing the measureless folly of those brainless *grandes dames*, whom he treated with the rudeness of a slave-trader, being repaid by them with all the more idolatry and admiration. A miracle-monger who could bring the dead to life would have been less in demand than this illustrious hairdresser. When a woman was of sufficient importance to receive his ministrations, and when, by dint of palaver or interest or the recommendations of friends, she had succeeded in securing an interview, the artist would arrive—always in a hurry—would look at his client, clasp his forehead in his hands, appear for some minutes to study the figure and general deportment of the patient, who was gasping with emotion, and then, as he felt the inspiration come to him—*Deus ecce, Deus!*—he would pounce upon the first objects that came to hand, a cabbage, a scarf, a sponge, some apples, a child's toy boat, and with the help of these accessories would build up his extravagant edifice on the head of his crushed but delighted victim. Thus it was that the Duchesse de Luynes presented herself one day in the royal circle with one of her chemises in her hair, an idea which was thought to be "quite too delightfully foolish"; and that Madame de Matignon made her appearance with her locks dressed *à la jardinière*, carrying on her head an artichoke, a head of green broccoli, a pretty carrot, and a few little radishes. Rousseau had made nature fashionable; nothing was acceptable but simplicity.

Hence this kitchen garden. As one of these ladies said, "Vegetables are so much more *natural* than flowers, are they not?"

With such things as these Léonard trimmed the hair of all the pretty women in Paris from 1785 to 1792. The noblest and the most charming heads passed through his hands; every day his nimble fingers gently touched those pink and perfumed necks that were so soon to be torn by the steel triangle of the guillotine. In the days of the Terror this man must have been tortured by horrible visions every evening as he read in the gazettes the account of the executions af the previous day: visions of Sanson's scissors shearing off the soft hair that his own golden comb had so often smoothed; of the horrible basket in which were heaped indiscriminately the long curls, fair and dark, that he knew so well; of the white necks that he had once made beautiful in the cause of pleasure and love—bared now by the brutal hands of the executioner's assistants.

Physically, Léonard was a precise little person, very dapper and bustling, with slightly prominent cheek-bones, a pointed and rather turned-up nose, and a vague likeness to Robespierre, who for his part resembled a hairdresser of a misanthropical temperament.

The way in which Léonard became mixed up with the drama of Varennes is rather obscure. When one reads the narratives of his contemporaries one always feels that on this subject there is something "that is left unsaid." Moreover, this actor in the drama has been regarded as so insignificant that until now no one has thought of collecting and harmonising the rare statements about him that are scattered through the documents of the time. Such a compilation, however, is not without interest, as we shall see.

On the 20th June, 1791, at a quarter past one in the afternoon, Marie Antoinette, being on the point of sitting down to the table with the King, sent for Léonard, who lived in the Tuileries in his capacity of *valet-de-chambre* to her Majesty. He lost no time in presenting himself in the salon where the royal family were gathered. He saw the King chatting with Madame Elizabeth in an embrasure, and the

Dauphin playing with his sister. The Queen, who was leaning against the chimney-piece, signed to the hairdresser to come near, and said in a low voice:

"Léonard, I can count upon you?"[1]

"Ah, Madame," he answered, "dispose of me as you will. I am entirely devoted to you."

"And I am very sure of your devotion," replied Marie Antoinette. (These are her actual words.) "Here is a letter: take it to the Duc de Choiseul in the Rue d'Artois. Give it into no hands but his. If he has not yet returned home, he will be at the Duchesse de Grammont's house. Put on an overcoat and a round hat, to avoid being recognised. Obey him exactly as though he were myself, without pausing to think, and without the least opposition."

The Queen appeared much moved. She added:

"Go quickly, and say to him ten thousand things from me."

Léonard bowed and left the room. At two o'clock he reached the Duc de Choiseul's house, dressed in white silk stockings, silk knee-breeches, a large riding-coat over everything, and a wide-brimmed hat that shaded his forehead and eyes. The Duke, who was expecting him, made him promise to obey blindly; then, opening the Queen's letter, showed the last lines of it to Léonard, who read a fresh injunction to execute faithfully the orders he would receive. Then M. de Choiseul burnt the note in the flame of a taper, and led away the stupefied hairdresser.[2] In the courtyard of the house a closed cabriolet was standing, and Léonard, seeing that he was expected to enter it, drew back. On hearing that the Duke "was to take him very quickly to a spot some leagues from Paris, to fulfil a special commission," he excused himself, saying that he could not go.

[1] Choiseul's Narrative. It is unnecessary to say that all the dialogues here are quoted verbatim, exactly as they are recorded in the original Narratives.

[2] "'You are quite convinced,' I said to him, 'that the Queen's intention is that you should do everything I tell you?' 'Yes, Monsieur.' 'Nevertheless, read these last lines, repeating her order to that effect.' He read them and said to me, 'Monsieur, there was no need for me to do so.' Then, taking a candle, I burnt the letter. The man watched me, somewhat bewildered as to the meaning of all this."—Choiseul's Narrative.

LÉONARD.

"Monsieur," he said, "how can I do it? I have left my key in the door at the palace; my brother will not know what has become of me; and I have promised Madame de Laage to dress her hair. She is expecting me; my cabriolet is waiting in the court of the Tuileries to take me to her. *Mon Dieu!* How can I arrange for all these things?"

Choiseul laughingly assured him that orders were already given that his servant should be relieved from anxiety and his horse cared for; that he would be able to dress Madame de Laage's hair another day; and even as he was speaking he drew the man into the carriage and lowered the blinds. They then started off at a great pace along the road to Bondy. A footman named Boucher was on the bracket-seat.

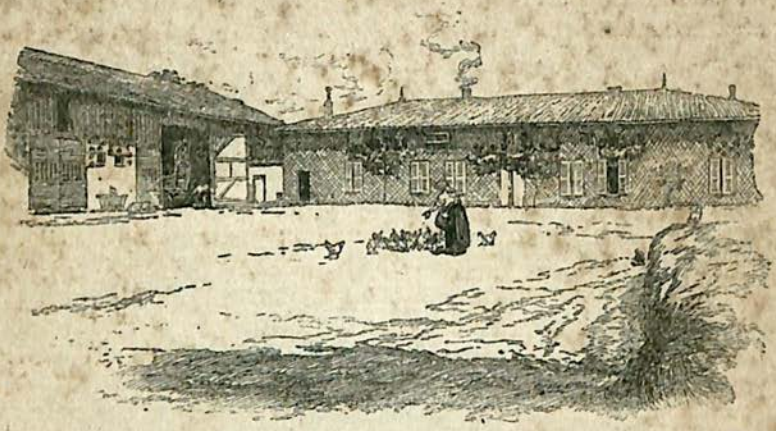
At Bondy some post-horses were ready for the cabriolet, which went on without delay to Meaux. At every stage Léonard's astonishment increased, while he perpetually reverted to his uneasiness as to his key, his servant, and Madame de Laage's hair, repeating continually, "She is waiting for me, Monsieur, she is waiting for me! Where can we be going?" When he found that they were going beyond Meaux his agitation became such that it was really necessary to reveal a portion of the truth to him. The Duke informed him then that he was being taken to the frontier, "where he was to carry out a mission of the greatest importance, concerned with the Queen's service,"[1] reminding him of his promise to obey unhesitatingly, and appealing to his devotion. Léonard began to cry.

"Oh, certainly, Monsieur, certainly," he moaned. (These conversations are recorded in this precise form either in the documents of the *dossier* or in the depositions of the principal actors in the drama.) "But how shall I get back? I am in

[1] "It was much worse when we had passed Claye and he saw that I was going beyond Meaux. Then I assumed an air of great gravity and said to him: 'Listen to me, Léonard: it is not to a house in the neighbourhood of Paris that I am taking you, but to the frontier, to a place near my regiment. There I ought to find a letter of the highest importance to the Queen. Being unable to give it to her myself, it was necessary to find some sure hand by which to send it to her: she has chosen you, as being, on account of your devotion, the man most worthy of this trust.'"—Choiseul's Narrative.

silk stockings and breeches, as you see; I have no linen and no money. *Mon Dieu*, what shall I do!"

He grew calmer, however, when the Duke assured him he should want for nothing. At Montmirail the travellers made a halt and had some supper; then they lay down in their clothes on a bed, but by half-past three in the morning they were again on the road; at ten they changed horses at



YARD OF THE POSTING-HOUSE AT PONT-DE-SOMME-VESLE.

Châlons, and an hour later arrived at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, where they were awaited by forty hussars [1] under the com-

[1] To be strictly accurate, the forty hussars charged with the reception of the royal berline at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle were not yet at their post when Choiseul and Léonard arrived from Paris. "Before the posting-house," says Choiseul, "I found M. Aubriot (lieutenant) with my two saddle-horses." Aubriot also gives his version of the meeting. "M. le Duc de Choiseul arrived in a post-chaise, accompanied by Léonard, a *valet-de-chambre* of H.M. the Queen . . . M. le Duc, on the pretext of seeing if our horses suited us, drew me into the inner recesses of the stables. Having made sure that we were unobserved—'You will have the honour,' he said, 'of protecting the King, the Queen, M. le Dauphin, Madame Royale, Madame Elizabeth.' . . Then I began to shake all over; my legs gave way under the weight of my body; sparks of fire seemed to be darting in my veins; this secret, indeed, threw me into such a state of perturbation that it was impossible for me to answer M. le Duc, who was as much agitated as myself. . . M. le Duc wrote a note, which he entrusted to me. 'Go,' he said, 'towards Sainte-Ménehould: you will meet a detachment of fifty Lauzun hussars: give this note to the officer, and bring him with his hussars to the inn where we are ourselves.' I had not gone six hundred yards when I saw the hussars and acquitted myself of my

mand of Lieutenant Boudet. It was here that Choiseul, seeing that his companion's anxiety was increasing, thought it best to reveal everything. The King and his family, he said, should have left the Tuileries at midnight; before two hours had passed they would be here, and the hussars would escort the royal carriage to Sainte-Ménehould, where another detachment was stationed, commanded by Captain d'Andoins. At Clermont Colonel de Damas's dragoons were quartered, and they, as soon as the royal family had passed, were to "close the road" and stop all traffic until the King was safely in the Château de Thonnelles, near Montmédy, which had been prepared for his reception. The luggage-carrier of the cabriolet in which Choiseul and Léonard had travelled from Paris contained a garment worn by the King on state occasions—the red and gold Cherbourg coat—his linen, some of the Queen's jewels, and Madame Elizabeth's diamonds. Léonard thought the affair would be the death of him. He began by melting into tears, declaring his willingness to die for his good master and mistress, and protesting his devotion, and ended by "drying his eyes" and sitting down to the table, where he dined at considerable length.

Here a problem suggests itself. Why, among all the tried followers who composed the royal circle, was this brainless and feeble puppet chosen to fulfil the office of scout? Such men as Fersen or Brunier—the physician who attended the children of France—would have proved their usefulness in quite another fashion. Both had long been in the secret; both had offered their services for the journey. Léonard, on the other hand, was mistrusted, since as long as such a course was possible everyone was careful not to initiate him into the plot, and he was only informed of it at a distance of forty leagues from Paris, when discretion had become superfluous. Why, then, was this wig-maker mixed up in the affair? There is but one plausible answer: the Queen could not face the thought of being adorned less tastefully at Thonnelles

commission. I ordered some dinner for the soldiers, and we sat down, M. le Duc, M. Boudet, an officer in the Lauzuns commanding the detachment I had just brought there, M. de Goguelat, the adjutant-general, and myself. Our dinner was short; we were counting the minutes. . . "—Aubriot's Narrative, appended to Choiseul's Narrative.

than at the Tuileries; and so from all the gentlemen of her Court who were ready to give their lives for her, from that army of defenders who would have been faithful to death, she chose, to help her in this most serious event of her life—her hairdresser. And in accordance with the tragic justice of events, this frivolity was fatal to her. For here at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle the peasants were crowding round the hussars when a rumour arose that a levy by force of arms was imminent. A riot was the result,[1] and a real affray was on the point of breaking out. Choiseul, no doubt convinced that the royal carriage might appear at any moment, tried unsuccessfully to gain time, but the King's arrival had now been delayed by three hours, and it became a question whether he had not been stopped at Châlons. Perhaps even he had been prevented from leaving the Tuileries. In the face of the hostile attitude of the peasants Choiseul took it upon himself to withdraw the troops. He retired with them across the fields, leaving the road free, after having instructed Léonard to continue his journey in the cabriolet to Montmédy,[2] and to give information of the unfortunate turn of events to the officers of the detachments at Sainte-Ménehould and Clermont. He even entrusted him with a note to show to them, containing these words: "It does not appear as if the *Treasure* would pass to-day. To-morrow you will receive your orders." Thus Léonard was unexpectedly transformed into an active agent in the enterprise. He and Boucher, the Duke's valet, took the road to Sainte-Ménehould, where he must have arrived at seven o'clock in the evening.

In dealing with a matter of this kind one should bring the greatest caution to bear upon the subject before venturing

[1] In his account of the fight between his men and the peasants Choiseul makes this interesting remark: "There was a great deal of traffic on the road; carriages were coming and going all the time."

[2] "I made up my mind to send my cabriolet (with my servant and Léonard) to Montmédy by way of Varennes. I enjoined upon Léonard to explain my position as he passed to M. de Damas, young de Bouillé, and the General (de Bouillé), and to tell them I was waiting: I kept Madame Elizabeth's diamonds with me. . . I gave my servant a note of a few lines for M. d'Andoins at Sainte-Ménehould, in which I told him that I was alarmed at this extraordinary delay, and that I might perhaps be obliged to draw off my detachment, whose presence was disturbing the public peace"—Choiseul's Narrative.

to make deductions. One may be permitted, however, to imagine the state of Léonard's mind when he left M. de Choiseul at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle. Lately but a simple valet, he now found himself without any preparation charged with a mission which made him in a certain degree the arbiter of the King's fate and of the destiny of the nation. We must remember that, except his own protestations, we have no certain evidence that he was devoted to the royal cause, and future events were to give abundant proof that he did not allow himself to be inconvenienced by scruples. This is the kind of man, then, that we must imagine travelling towards the frontier, carrying with him the King's coat, which was worth a fortune, and the Queen's diamonds. M. de Choiseul had removed those of Madame Elizabeth from the casket and was carrying them on his own person. Was he, perhaps, prompted by mistrust?

THE SIGN OF THE "GRAND MONARQUE" HOTEL.

At Sainte-Ménehould Léonard was fairly sparing of words. He showed d'Andoins the note written by the Duke, and advised him to have the horses unsaddled and the men sent back to their quarters. At Clermont he *gave* this note to M. de Damas,[1] who, however, paid no attention to it.

[1] "At about half past seven a post-chaise arrived [at Clermont], in which I recognised M. de Choiseul's valet and Léonard, the Queen's hairdresser. They stopped and gave me a note containing these words: 'It does not appear as though the treasure would pass through to-day; I am off to join M. de Bouillé; you will receive fresh orders to-morrow.' I have learnt since that the same message was sent to M. d'Andoins at Sainte-Ménehould. Léonard introduced himself to me as being acquainted with the secret. I asked him what foundation there was for doubting that the royal family was coming through, and he said he had no idea; that he had come from Paris with M. de Choiseul, and had left him at Pont-de-Somme-Vesle with a detachment of hussars. I asked him if he had seen the detachment of dragoons at Sainte-Ménehould, and he told me he had seen some dragoons

Nothing now devolved upon him but to pursue his journey as a private individual; he was no longer the bearer of any message, and mere discretion demanded that in such serious circumstances he should not assume a responsibility which no one had laid upon him. At Varennes, however, where he arrived at half-past nine in the evening, we find him putting on airs of authority and giving orders. Two young officers were stationed there in command of some men—a son of General de Bouillé and M. de Raigecourt—who were keeping some horses in readiness for the royal carriage. It was a magnificent night, and the two young men, after taking a stroll about the town, were talking together upon a bench before the *Grand Monarque* hotel,[1] when Léonard's cabriolet drove up. The latter assumed an air of great importance, and summoned M. de Bouillé to the door of the carriage. "Ah, ah, I am very glad to find you! I have many things to tell you." He informed the astonished officers of his name and station in life, declaring that he knew everything, and was in charge of the Queen's jewels, and assured them that the King must have been stopped at Châlons. "I have informed M. de Damas of this, and he has dispersed his troops. And I strongly advise you to leave the place; you are running risks in staying here: there is a riot going on at Clermont; I had great difficulty in getting through."[2] He repeated over and over again *that he knew*

near the posting-house and had spoken to the officer. . . Léonard continued his journey to Stenay. . ."—Damas' Narrative.

[1] "At about half past nine M. de Raigecourt and I had just returned to the inn and were standing before the door, when we saw a very simple carriage drive up and stop there."—*Memoirs* of Count Louis de Bouillé, quoting the account of his brother the Chevalier.

[2] Here is the scene, as described to me by the Chevalier de Bouillé: "A man whose face was unknown to me appeared at the window of the carriage. . . He asked in a very loud voice if I were not M. le Chevalier de Bouillé. I answered that I was. 'Ah, I *am* very glad to find you here; I have a great deal to say to you.' I observed that I had not the honour of knowing him, and perceiving that a crowd was beginning to gather round the carriage, I said to him that it was not a proper place to enter into conversation. I invited him to alight and come into the inn. 'I shall be very glad to do so, but you are to let me have the horses you have here.' I was greatly surprised by this demand, and did not answer him. When we were in a room in the hotel he repeated his demand. I intimated to him that I did not understand what he was talking about. 'There is no need for you to hide anything from me; I know all.' My surprise increased every moment. 'I know all,' he went on; 'the King

all, that there was nothing that need be kept from him. He demanded some horses and went off at last, leaving the officers greatly discomfited. They must have been so to a terrible degree, and Léonard must have given them a very authoritative assurance of the King's arrest at Châlons, for when at about one o'clock in the morning M. de Damas, having hastened from Clermont, arrived at the *Grand Monarque* hotel, he found the house shut up, and was informed "that the two officers who had been staying there with a relay of horses had left in a great hurry and had taken the road to Stenay."

We know the rest: the disorganisation that was spread along the whole route; the disarming of the men and their return to quarters; the explanations occasioned by this retreat at Sainte-Ménehould between the King and M. d'Andoins, which gave Drouet the opportunity of recognising Louis XVI; the missing relay of horses at the entrance to Varennes; finally the arrest and recognition of the fugitives—a chain of fatal circumstances which cannot be explained if we ignore Léonard's strange action in the affair.

It was strange indeed. One chance remained to him of being useful to the royal family. If he had hurried on to Stenay, where the two regiments under the elder M. de Bouillé were stationed, his tales and false information would certainly have decided the latter to take his troops along the

has left Paris; but it does not appear as though he had been able to continue his journey. I have just informed M. de Damas of this; he has drawn off his men; the regiment of dragoons has mutinied, and there has been a riot at Clermont; I had great difficulty in getting through.' Seeing that my astonishment grew no less, he added: 'I am Léonard, *valet-de-chambre* and hairdresser to the Queen. I know all. In my carriage I have the coat worn by the King on state occasions, and the Queen's jewels; I am going to Luxembourg, where I am to await the Queen's orders. I shall return to Montmédy if the King goes there. I am afraid of being stopped; I absolutely must be off. Give me the horses you have here, and I strongly advise you to go away yourself, for you are running risks by staying here longer.' Seeing that he was indeed acquainted with the whole affair, I answered that my orders obliged me to stay at Varennes till four o'clock in the morning, and that I had no choice but to stay; also that I should very certainly not give him any horses. 'Help me to procure some, then,' he said, 'for I absolutely must start at once.' I was equally anxious for him to start . . . and appealed to the inn-keeper to try and procure him some horses. He succeeded in getting some for him, and he went off."—Memoirs of Count Louis de Bouillé.

Châlons road; but on leaving Varennes Léonard's postillion missed his way, and did not find out his mistake until he had travelled seven leagues, and was at the gates of Verdun.[1] He was obliged to turn back, and only appeared at Stenay late on the following day, when the King's arrest had been an accomplished fact for some hours, and there was no longer any hope of helping him. And now this poor man, who had talked so much when he ought to have been silent, was unable to answer a word to the people who questioned him.[2] M. de Bouillé has recorded: "We obtained no information from him as to the King's journey, *or of the arrest of which he had not heard:* his ideas were so much confused that everything he told us was very vague, even with regard to M. de Choiseul."

He handed over to M. de Bouillé, however, the casket of diamonds that had been entrusted to him, and Bouillé gave it into the charge of one of his officers. But these mysterious jewels, like enchanted talismans, were fated to bring ill-luck upon all who had them in their keeping. On the following day the officer was found covered with wounds and almost dying: as for the casket, it had disappeared.[3]

Proceedings were instituted, as everyone knows, against Bouillé and the agents in the King's *abduction.* The Assembly had devised this euphemism, which threw the responsibility of the enterprise upon the royalist party. All those who had taken any more or less active part in the affair—whether they had emigrated or no—had writs issued against them. It is a curious fact that Léonard was not indicted, and still more

[1] Memoirs of Count Louis de Bouillé. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] "It was Léonard the Queen's hairdresser who was entrusted with the casket containing the crown diamonds. The sceptre and the crown, so it is declared, arrived safely at Luxembourg; but at the time of the arrest Léonard handed over to M. de *Damas* [the chronicler here makes a slip; he should have written *Bouillé*] the casket in which were the other jewels. M. de Damas [*de Bouillé*] entrusted it to an officer, who was wounded and carried away on a bed. The casket disappeared."—*Correspondance Secrète,* published by Lescure, June 30, 1791.

We must point out that the crown diamonds were not in the casket, but only the personal jewels of the Queen. The Assembly ascertained, as early as June 21, that the crown jewels were untouched, and that the Queen before her departure had returned to the treasury—with the exception of one precious stone—such of the jewels as she used personally, together with a number of others that were her private property.—*Parliamentary Archives,* Vol. XXVII., p. 448.

curious that he seemed to be in no hurry to return to France, although he would have incurred no danger in doing so. This man, who was so anxious to allay the impatience of his noble clients, so destitute of money when he left Paris that he was uneasy as to *how he would return*, found means of living for three months in a foreign country[1] without anything being heard of him. So long an absence entailed, as one can well believe, the loss of *clientèle;* and moreover, when he reappeared in Paris he continued to live in retirement. Either because the times were not propitious for the exercise of his art, or because he thought it more prudent to let himself be forgotten, it would appear that he abandoned the comb and courted privacy until the 10th August.[2] It might be thought that on the establishment of the Republic he would be ranked among the "suspects." Not at all. He obtained employment at Versailles[3] in connection with army remounts, and was occupying this peaceable position when at last the Terror laid its hand upon him. He was arrested in Messidor of the year II, was condemned to death on the

[1] *National Archives*, W. 432.

[2] After August 10th, having taken refuge at Versailles, he claimed his possessions, which were under seal at the Tuileries. (*In justice to M. Léonard's orthography, the letter is left as in the original.—Trans.*)

"J'ai l'honneur de mettre sous les yeux de Messieurs les commissaires chargés des scellés du château des Thuileries que moi, hautier [*sic*] coiffeur de la reine, que j'ait une chambre cour des princes brésil [?] du corridor noir, escalier No. 7, sous le comble dans laquel chambre javois les effets que je sousmais a Messieurs les commissaires. Scavoir: un habit et veste abillés rayés d'une rais jeaune garnis de boutons d'acier,—un frac noir, boutons noirs,—un habit et veste d'uniforme du département de Versailles —une redingote de piquet blanc et son pantalont,—une épée de deuil, un manchon, un parasol de tafetas vert (etc. etc.).

"Certifie conforme à Versailles le 9 Septembre, 1791, François Autié Léonard, cadet, coiffeur de la reine."—*National Archives*, T. 1077.

[3] Here is a note found in his dossier:—"Very *suspect* on account of the manners he affected in the days of the *ancien régime*, and of his familiarity with Marie Antoinette, as shown in the journey to Varennes. He was denounced to the Committee of Public Safety as having been the bearer of the diamonds of Antoinette and Elizabeth Capet on the occasion of the journey to Varennes."—*National Archives*, W. 432.

Some lines in the form of commandments were discovered among his possessions:—

La liberté tu prôneras
En la violant tout doucement,
Les biens du peuple retiendras
Sans rendre compte aucunement, etc.

7th Thermidor,[1] and figured in the same batch as Rouchet and André Chenier. The bodies were thrown into the common trench of Picpus, and, as was the custom, the death of the condemned persons was formally registered in accordance with the statement delivered to the executioner, and the document handed over to the public registrar.[2]

In 1814 Léonard the hairdresser returned from Russia, where he had spent twenty years.

If we were telling the story of Rocambole no one would be surprised that this hero, so famous for his successive resurrections, should reappear upon the scene; but on the part of a person who is not concerned with clearing up the plot of a novel such an apparition is, to say the least of it, unusual. There is, however, no room for scepticism. Jean François Autié, *alias Léonard*, who was guillotined with every official formality in the year II, was still alive at the time of the Restoration. In the *Quotidienne* of March 16, 1838, his nephew, Joseph Clair Auguste Autié, hairdresser, of No. 10 Rue de Bellechasse—the son of the *Chevalier*—protested against the publication of some very apocryphal memoirs which were attributed by Lamotte-Langon to the man who had once been Marie Antoinette's hairdresser, and declared "that he had never been parted from his uncle after 1814, the year of his return to France, until the time of his death." Moreover, his death certificate—the second—was among the public registers of Paris before the fire of 1871, and I believe the learned Alfred Bégis possessed an authentic copy of it. It was dated March 24, 1820.[3]

There is, then, no doubt of his survival; but it would be immensely interesting to know how Léonard contrived to figure among the number of the guillotined, at the same time avoiding the disagreeable formality that conferred an incontestable right to that position.

D'Estourmel in his *Souvenirs* tells the very exciting story of a condemned man who, having alighted from the cart at the foot of the scaffold in the Place de la Révolution, and being

[1] *L'Intermédiaire*, No. 529.
[2] See *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, No. 532.
[3] *L'Intermédiaire*, Nos. 529 and 531.

twentieth on the list, looked on, with his hands bound to his sides and his hair cut short, while his companions in misfortune were executed. When the business was half completed the machine became out of order, and while it was being repaired by the executioner's assistants the ten unfortunate survivors stood there upon the road awaiting death, surrounded by a circle of gendarmes. Behind them the onlookers were pushing up to see the sight, though the crowd was small, for it was late and night was falling. Either because the cruel delay had exhausted his endurance, or because he had observed among the bystanders some signs of pity, the condemned man in question leant against one of the gendarmes who formed the circle. Suddenly, without a word or sign being exchanged, he felt that a space was opening between the guard and his neighbour. The condemned man slipped through the gap, and immediately the line closed up behind him. He stood there motionless, breathless with suppressed emotion, in the first row of the spectators, expecting to be recaptured, when suddenly a hand placed a hat upon his head, and he understood that the people who surrounded him were conniving at his escape. Stepping backwards gradually while pretending to stand on tiptoe so as to see better, he soon found himself outside the crowd. Then, with the air of a man taking a stroll with his hands behind his back, he reached the deserted side of the square, and then the dark paths of the Champs-Élysées. From that vantage-ground he was able to assure himself that the execution was finished without any incident. Sanson doubtless did not count his victims, and as the death certificates were drawn up in accordance with the statement delivered to the executioner, the number that evening was the same as usual. The man was saved. He spent the night in a ditch, and at daybreak, accosting a market-gardener who was coming down from Chaillot, he told him some tale about a bet that he had made with some friends and had lost in his cups, showed his bound hands, and begged the man to help him out of his plight. The peasant, who thoroughly relished the story of the joke, willingly consented.

Vaublanc, in his *Mémoires sur la Révolution*, tells a similar

story, and supports it with details that are identically the same. He even gives the name of the man who so miraculously escaped the knife of the guillotine. He was called de Châteaubrun, and was still alive under the restored monarchy. Neither the extremely accurate tables of Campardon nor those of Wallon make any mention of this condemned man; but the anecdote may be none the less true, since many of the nobles had a family name preceding the *de*, which they did not ordinarily use, but by which they were called before the Revolutionary Tribunal. In any case, the story shows how a condemned man, handed over to the executioner and subsequently certified to be dead, might nevertheless be quite alive, although officially entered in the register of deaths.

If, however, Léonard had owed his life to so uncertain a chance, there would have been no reason to make a mystery of it. He remained obstinately silent as to the strangeness of his case, and since we know the fatuity of the man, we can only conclude that there was nothing to boast of in the affair, which gives us reason to think that some unfortunate person had been substituted for him during the hours between his condemnation and his removal from prison, and had taken his place upon the scaffold.

There is nothing inherently improbable in this solution. Lombard de Langres declares that on a certain day one of the victims was missing when the names were called over. Sanson would not be defrauded: he had been given thirty-eight "death-papers," and he insisted on having his thirty-eight "clients." As the jailers were scouring the whole prison in vain, one of the prisoners, sick of living, presented himself at the registrar's table, saying, "Bah! I or another, what difference does it make to you? Take me." And he voluntarily completed the tale of victims. Although the authenticity of this story is vouched for by Lombard de Langres, we cannot accept it as it stands. Matters were not conducted in this way at the Conciergerie. But there were there a number of Bretons and Alsacians and men from Mayence, who every day saw the terrible emptying of the prison, but knew nothing of the revolutionary procedure except that those who were taken away were led to the

scaffold. What would be easier than to choose one of these poor wretches, who had no protector, no notoriety, no relations, no *dossier* even, and who knew not one word of French, and to hustle him off to the registrar's office? Then his hair would be cut off, and he would be bound and pushed into the cart. He could be relied upon not to protest. To whom should he protest, indeed, and how?

But a trick of this kind was expensive. It was necessary to secure the complicity of a jailer, of the porter, and of the registrar—all of them people to be bought, it is true, but only at a high price. Here one's mind reverts to the casket containing the Queen's jewels, which, owing to the King's arrest at Varennes, was left in Léonard's hands and disappeared so mysteriously on the very morrow of the day on which he was obliged to give it up. If one cannot carry sacks of silver or piles of gold to prison with one, diamonds, on the other hand, are easy to conceal, and are always current coin, especially when paper money is common.

I do not say that these things occurred; I am but seeking a solution of the three enigmas to which the undeniable facts give rise: the unaccountable conduct of Léonard during the night of the drama of Varennes, which could hardly have been otherwise if he had wished the royal carriage to be stopped; his extraordinary experiences as a guillotined man who was nevertheless in perfect health; and his surprising silence with regard to these facts, when it would have been to his advantage to make the most of them if they had been creditable to him. Why did he never tell his story? It was certainly worth the trouble, and he had both time and means. In 1818 he was Superintendent of Burials, and it must have been an edifying sight to see him—the gay Léonard, once the Queen's hairdresser—marching in short breeches and mourning cloak, with a black cane in his hand, at the head of a funeral procession. And when the chances of his office took him to the cemetery of Picpus, where were buried all those who perished *with him* on the scaffold, he must have experienced the most unusual sensations.

He died—finally—at the age of sixty-two, in the Rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, in 1820.

CHAPTER X

PÈRE SAUCE

THE building at Varennes-en-Argonne that is locally known as Louis XVI's house was recently offered for sale. It is the house in which the royal family remained for seven hours during the night of June 21st, 1791.

To-day it is a very ordinary house, with no special characteristics. It has a quiet, neat appearance, and stands facing the Rue de la Basse Cour, which is the main artery of the place. In 1845, the departmental road from Bar to Dun having been promoted to the dignity of a royal road, it became necessary to widen the roadway in the town, and seven properties that jutted out were encroached upon. Louis XVI's house lost 5 mètres 88 centimètres of ground, which robbed it of its entire frontage. The owner received an indemnity of 403 francs 80 centimes,[1] which is not a large price for the façade of an historical building.

It is to this freak of fortune that the famous house owes its present commonplace appearance, its plaster cornices, its Venetian blinds, and its door with the panel of wrought iron. In 1791 it was a nice old place, built entirely of wood, as was the custom of the country, with a shop lighted by two windows that would not open. To enter the house it was necessary to pass through the shop. The door, which was composed of one leaf only, was divided horizontally in the middle, and the upper part, which was not glazed, was only closed at night. At the back of the shop, in the left-hand corner, near the kitchen-door, a narrow, unlighted

[1] *Mémoires du Général Radet*, note 19.

wooden staircase, with a cord by way of a handrail, led up to the first story. Here there were two rooms—a large one in front, and a smaller one separated from the first by a dark passage which served as a landing for the staircase. This second room looked out over a little yard, connected with a lane that was always deserted.

J. B. SAUCE.

This building, destined to be for a few hours a royal residence, was occupied at the time of the Revolution by that excellent man Jean Baptiste Sauce, the grocer and chandler whom we have seen figuring in our story. He was born at Varennes in 1755, and married at the age of nineteen to Marie Jeanne Fournel of Varennes, by whom he had three sons and a daughter. Auguste, the eldest of the boys, was sixteen years of age in 1791, while the youngest, François Clément, was five, and the little girl, Félicité, was nine.[1]

[1] Jean Baptiste Sauce, born at Varennes on the 4th March, 1755, married Marie Jeanne Fournel, and had issue :—

A. Jean Baptiste Félix Auguste, born at Varennes 14th Dec., 1775. Private soldier in the 1st battalion of the Meuse, June 9th, 1792. Second-lieutenant Dec. 1st, 1792. Volunteer in the 1st battalion of the Chasseurs of the Meuse, June 1st, 1793. Second-lieutenant 24th Brumaire, year IV. Lieutenant 6th Germinal, year VII. Captain 11th Messidor, year XII. Major Sept. 18th, 1811. Captain in the 6th regiment of Rifles of the Guard on the same day. Major on half-pay at headquarters March 23rd, 1813. On half-pay March 1st, 1816. Died unmarried at Saint-Mihiel Dec. 31st, 1859.—*Archives of the War Office.*

B. Jean Baptiste, born at Varennes Sept. 29th, 1777, died at Saint-Mihiel, Nov. 10th, 1852. Superintendent of police. He married Anne Cavalerie, and had four children, whose descendants are now alive.

C. Marie Anne Félicité, born at Varennes Jan. 18th, 1782; married, first, Hyacinthe Laurent, and secondly Joseph Goujet.

D. François Clément, born at Varennes in 1786 ; married Josephine Dodo. Died at Saint-Mihiel April 1st, 1821.

To these four children whose names are furnished by the parish registers we must add a certain Geneviève Sauce, aged nineteen in 1793, who made the following deposition before the tribunal of Saint-Mihiel on the occasion

Sauce, though his education was meagre, as we may see by his orthography, was so much esteemed by his neighbours that he had been elected *procureur-syndic* of the commune, and in the absence of George, the Mayor, who was the local deputy to the National Assembly, he was the chief magistrate of Varennes. His long thin face, his tall and slightly stooping figure, his serious deportment and deliberate gait, gave him, in spite of the fact that he was but thirty-six years of age, the appearance of an old man. He was known as Père Sauce.

One would give a good deal to know in detail how this worthy tradesman passed his time on June 21st, 1791, the day before the catastrophe to which he owed his fame. If anyone had prophesied to him on that day that he was on the point of playing a "star part" in history he would certainly have doubted the truth of the revelation. Fame fell at his feet like an aërolite. The day before the event he was completely unknown; the day after it he was honoured and scorned, congratulated and cursed, by the whole of Europe.

Another man might perhaps have felt a presentiment. On the 20th a strong detachment of hussars had marched through to Châlons, disturbing the accustomed calm of Varennes, which was far from all the main roads; on the 21st some more hussars—about sixty—had taken up their quarters in Varennes itself, and Sauce had lodged them in the disused convent of the Cordeliers. He had been assured that these troops were to secure a safe passage for a *treasure*, and that a

of Radet's trial: "Declared that at the time of the arrest of Louis Capet at Varennes, Radet came to the house of *the deponent's father* to know what was going to be done with that traitor; that the deponent's father and mother answered that he must be persuaded to return to Paris; that Radet, having gone up to the corridor that led to the room where that scoundrel was lying down, had found Choiseul at the door," etc.

From this list of names we gather that—with possible omissions—the children of the Sauce family in June, 1791, were Geneviève, seventeen years of age; Auguste, fifteen and a half; Jean Baptiste, fourteen; Félicité, nine and a half; and Clément, about five.

We cannot sufficiently express our gratitude to M. Charles Bazoche, honorary notary at Commercy, who, during several years while we were carrying on our researches on the subject of Varennes, allowed us to draw upon his profound learning and to make use of his collection of precious documents touching people and things connected with the department of the Meuse. We beg him to accept our respectful thanks.

considerable camp was being formed under the walls of Montmédy. Moreover, a general and several officers of high rank were lodging in the *Grand Monarque* hotel, where a relay of horses had been made ready. Honest Sauce had no suspicions. There is a letter still existing which he wrote on that very 21st June to an unknown correspondent, and there is nothing to be read between its lines but a naïve pleasure in the fact that the town for whose welfare he was responsible was becoming quite important. "General Volgta"—one should read *Goguelat*; Sauce had an incorrigible habit of mangling proper names—"General Voltga is here, and has expressed to me his satisfaction at the courteous way in which we have lodged his troops. . . . A hussar of Stérazie's regiment"—he means *Esthérazy's*—"has arrived here with his horses, to wait for that general." This was the relay of horses prepared for the royal carriage. And Sauce adds: "What do you think now of our fine town? Generals, aides-de-camp, colonels—these are the people that come to see us! And you still believe that we are not a real metropolis! These gentlemen consider war to be impracticable just now, so there is nothing to be uneasy about."

These words, "nothing to be uneasy about," were certainly the last that Sauce wrote before "his great misfortune." And indeed Varennes had never been more peaceful. In the cool of the evening the hussars strolled about on the banks of the Aire, while the girls sat before the doors twining garlands for the Corpus Christi procession, which was fixed for the day after the morrow. By ten o'clock the whole town was abed. Sauce had been asleep for more than an hour and a half when someone battered violently at the door of his shop; then, as he did not wake at once, the blows were repeated, and a voice full of distress and agitation called to him from the street. He ran to the window. "What is the matter?" "Come quickly, Père Sauce; the King and Queen are here!"

The King and Queen! Who can ever know the thoughts that passed through the brain of the grocer as he heard this astounding news? What should he do? Where should he go? What should he say? One can imagine the excitement in that disordered room: Sauce hastily pulling on his breeches;

his wife jumping up, hearing the news, sitting there dumfounded and stupid; the children running down to the door with their feet bare to see all they could; and Sauce, plunged suddenly without warning from his quiet slumbers into the midst of a tragedy, standing in the street, lantern in hand, stopping the berline, facing the travellers, and demanding their passport. We have already told the facts.

The King, the Queen, the Dauphin and his sister, Madame Elizabeth, Madame de Tourzel, two women-of-the-bedchamber —Madame Brunier and Madame Neuville—and the three bodyguards, after spending a few minutes at the *Bras d'Or* inn, were taken to Sauce's shop, escorted by more or less of a crowd. Sauce's children had run into the streets crying "Fire!" to give the alarm, and all the inhabitants of Varennes had sprung from their beds, and hearing the news had run to the spot, where they now stood with gaping mouths, staring at the house.

Meantime the captives, having crossed Sauce's shop, had been taken up to the back room on the first floor where the three boys slept. To-day, when one looks at that narrow, low room, where nothing has been changed, one is surprised that so many people could pass a whole night in such a wretched hole. It is, however, quite certain, as many depositions testify, that the prisoners passed backwards and forwards from one room to the other, and were not confined all the time in "the room at the back," which, despite its two windows, is of the size and appearance of an inferior servant's room.

It is useless to relate afresh the end of that famous night: the arrival of the hussars and their insubordination, the vain attempts to rescue the royal family, the King's indolent patience, the patriotic obstinacy of the peasants of Varennes, the arrival of the emissaries of the Parisian National Guard. The most attractive feature of the whole affair is the personality of Sauce, that worthy fellow whose house was suddenly invaded by the world's history, yet who—and this was rare at the time—adopted no theatrical pose, nor thought himself to be acting the hero's part in a tragedy. He was not, like some others, "nourished on classical

antiquity"; this hero was frankly ignorant of Livy and the elder Pliny; and it is refreshing to find, in these days of the Revolution, a person who did his duty like an honest French peasant without comparing himself to Brutus or quoting a sentence from Tacitus. He was even so unique a phenomenon as to abstain from alluding to the King as Tiberius or Tarquin, whose names he had doubtless never heard. He was agitated and confused; he did not know which way to turn; he ran about hither and thither, calming one and reassuring another; and Louis XVI, who was paralysed with shyness in the presence of eloquent politicians and famous statesmen, found in this gentle grocer a kindred soul. He was quite at his ease, and took courage to talk confidentially and sympathetically. There is no doubt that if his stay at Varennes had been prolonged Sauce would have become one of "his friends."

The Committee of Inquiries instituted by the National Assembly had, on the first news of the King's flight, given orders that all correspondence of suspicious origin should be retained and read by the postal authorities. Among the Archives there are several portfolios full of letters intercepted in this way, and the letter from Sauce that is quoted above was thus preserved. There is another, and more valuable, letter of his, in which he describes to a friend the night of June 21st. "The King and his family," he writes, "were travelling with a false passport signed *Louis*, and lower down *Monmorin*, which permitted the Duchesse de Durfort"—the passport, as we know, was made out in the name of the Baronne de Korff, but Sauce persists in disfiguring proper names—"to leave France for Frankfort with her children and her *valets-de-chambre*. Having been warned of the secret schemes of certain suspected persons, I stopped the carriages at eleven o'clock in the evening, and took the seven fugitives to my house: the King, the Queen, the Dauphin, Madame Première, Madame Elizabeth, an aunt of the King's"—this was Madame de Tourzel—"and a young lady who is said to be Monsieur's wife"—Madame Neuville. "The fugitives were recognised, and the King embraced me and clasped me in his arms, saying to me, the King himself:

'Yes, I am leaving public life, my dear friend, to live in your midst. I wish to go to Montmédy.' He told me several things that I will repeat to you another time. I temporised, hoping for help. At last, when daylight came and we had found help, I, together with two delegates from the Paris Guard, announced to our august visitors that they must retrace their way. The King fell into a rage, and tried to gain time by going to sleep, because he was expecting the Royal Germans and some of the Royal Dragoons. Finally I urged upon their Majesties to think the matter over, and to fulfil the desire of the people who adored them; they started off, and went to Clermont with more than fifteen thousand men. . . . I will tell you the rest."[1]

Other letters dated from Varennes on the day after the arrest depict, better than any of the narratives, the disturbance and agitation of the little town. Here are two addressed by the wife of Judge Destez to *her dear mamma* at Versailles. She describes the circumstances with surprising enthusiasm, and even acrimony.

"Sauce came at midnight to wake up my husband to go and inspect the faces of those people. When he had seen them he had no doubt as to who they were. The Queen and Madame Elizabeth, seeing that they were recognised, looked very sulky. You must allow that Varennes has immortalised itself by the way it has behaved; if it had not been for our *procureur* of the commune the affair would not have come off. You should have seen how the people ran in from the whole countryside, and how those that came were received. As far as we are concerned, it has cost us a great deal in bread, wine, beer, bacon, beds, etc., etc., not forgetting the bustle and fatigue, and all the consequences of such a sudden alarm. I must not forget to tell you that the detachment of hussars who are here behaved like angels; if they had insisted on obeying we should have been lost."

And further on:

"Sauce, our *procureur* of the commune, has just been telling me extraordinary things. The King and Queen told

[1] G. Fischbach, *La fuite de Louis XVI d'après les archives municipales de Strasbourg.*

him, with tears in their eyes, that if they had not left Paris they would have been murdered by the Orléans party. They made him endless confidences of the kind. They burnt in his house an enormous mass of papers which he is much annoyed at not having seized; but he was not in the room at the moment; he had gone out to give some orders. The whole of France owes thanks to Sauce. If it had not been for him and his determination the King would have gone on, and if it had not been for his discretion there would have been a number of people killed."[1]

And indeed it is true enough that the poor man who was to pay so dearly for the melancholy honour of having entertained the King deserved to be held up as a model of civic courage. To be startled out of his sleep to control the destinies of France without a moment's warning is a dangerous situation for a simple village grocer, and all the more difficult that his personal bias was obviously in favour of the King. Sauce, from a sense of duty, remained inflexibly firm before the entreaties of Marie Antoinette, who had succeeded in winning Mirabeau and was soon to move the heart of Barnave. If Varennes ever raises a monument to commemorate the event that has made its name famous, a bust of Sauce would only be a just compensation for the miseries which his moderation and firmness brought upon this "obscure martyr." For to return to "the thanks of the whole of France," which he had every right to expect—we shall see what came of that.

On the morning of the 22nd Varennes was in a most critical position. Bouillé was hastening thither with his German regiments; his advance-guard appeared among the vines of Chépy barely half an hour after the King had been prevailed upon to return to Paris. All the national guards of the neighbourhood, who had mustered at the sound of the tocsin, had accompanied the royal procession; no one was left in the town but the women and a few old men. Sauce had left his family and had started off to walk to Paris with the prisoners, but hearing at Clermont a rumour that Varennes had been sacked by the dragoons of the Royal German Regiment, he hastily returned, expecting to find nothing but ruins.

[1] *National Archives, dossier* already quoted.

It was a false alarm, however, for Bouillé and his horsemen had disappeared.

On the very next day the accusations began. It was thought strange that the *procureur-syndic* should have thus "confiscated the King in his house" during a whole night, and many people were persuaded that Louis XVI had "made the fortune" of his host on the understanding that the latter should help him to escape, but that Sauce, having secured the money, had kept the royal family shut up until the arrival of the emissaries from Paris—a two-edged accusation which outraged the feelings of patriots and royalists alike. Others held him responsible for the reprisals with which Varennes was threatened, and for the expenses and trouble of all kinds that the affair had involved.[1]

While every day the courier was bringing congratulatory addresses from all corners of France, in which the name of Sauce was lauded to the skies and extolled with those of the greatest heroes of antiquity, the poor grocer was being criticised, discredited, and vilified by his own neighbours. One day he came straightforwardly to inform the municipality that he had discovered, on examining his accounts, that the sum of fifty livres had been entered twice over. He handed over the amount to the secretary of the commune, but was at once accused of embezzlement, and meetings were held to "bring him to judgment." In the distribution of the rewards decreed by the Assembly his name was put down for a sum of 20,000 livres, and he asked to be given, instead of this, "two places for his eldest sons in the National Guard." He received the money, however, whereupon there was such an outcry that he thought it his duty to give up 3,000 livres to patriots whose zeal had not been officially remunerated. Soon afterwards he learnt that an inquiry had been set on foot to investigate "the events of which Varennes had been the theatre"; and thinking, or being persuaded, that the inquiry was directed against himself, he decided on a fresh sacrifice. He gave up 10,000 livres, begging that "his sentiments and his attachment to his fellow townsmen might be made known, and his statement read and published," and

[1] *L'événement de Varennes*, by Victor Fournel.

moreover, he placed "his life, the lives of his family, and all his possessions"[1] under the protection of the law.

His enemies did not lay down their arms. His office as *procureur-syndic* was taken from him, and he was reduced to the humble post of registrar to the court of the *Juge de Paix*. His accounts were examined, and on some mistakes being discovered in them the department was asked to "authorise his prosecution, in order to enforce the restitution of sums unlawfully levied, and to bring against him an accusation of forging receipts." Being forced to leave Varennes, he migrated to Saint-Mihiel, where he obtained the post of registrar to the tribunal. He lodged in the Place des Halles, in the house which is now No. 8, and has a well midway between it and a house in the Rue Neuve. Amid this unanimous obloquy one person showed him affection and gratitude, one only—the King. When Sauce was tidying his house after the disturbance of the 21st June he had discovered a silver-gilt *nécessaire* which the fugitives had forgotten and left behind them. He lost no time in sending it to the Intendant General of the King's Household, begging him to acknowledge its arrival. In the margin of the answer Louis XVI wrote these words with his own hands: "I thank M. Sauce and his family very warmly for their attentions to me: I shall be grateful to them all my life.—Louis."[2]

The contents of this letter were noised abroad, and cost Sauce renewed insults. He was accused of having tried to save the King, and after the fall of the monarchy in August 1792, he was openly denounced as a royalist, which fact did not prevent the royalists from holding him up to the vengeance of the *émigrés* when the Prussians invaded Argonne. Upon this Sauce lost his head: he fled, and wandered about Champagne, hiding himself under a false name, till finally he was stranded at Troyes without resources. And, indeed, his fears were not chimerical. He had left his wife and second son at Saint-Mihiel, and when a Prussian regiment entered the town at five o'clock on the morning of

[1] Municipal Register of Varennes. See also an article in the *Courrier de Gorsas* of Sept. 8th, 1792.

[2] Ancelon, *Fuite et arrestation de Louis XVI.*

September 3rd, to the great triumph of the partisans of the old *régime*, the Mayor of Rouvrois, a peasant called Constant, led the Germans—whether willingly or by compulsion is not known—to the Place des Halles, where "according to a signal agreed upon he pointed out Sauce's house by tapping with his foot in a particular way." The house was at once invaded,[1] and Sauce's second son, Jean Baptiste, at that time fifteen years old, was dragged "with a pistol at his head" to the town hall. Madame Sauce, in a panic, tried to escape to the neighbouring house, and climbed over the wall that surrounded the well between the two dwellings; but falling into the well, she broke her legs, and was drawn out in a dying state. She died a few days later. "What a shocking woman!" said the good folk of the town. "She wanted to escape from her remorse by committing suicide."[2]

[1] Dumont, *Histoire de Saint-Mihiel.*

[2] The *Petit Temps* of Sept. 27th, 1903, published a very curious account of this exploit, founded on the recollections of General Minutoli, who in 1792 was a lieutenant in the Prussian army. It must be observed that the Prussians thought they had to deal with Drouet, not with Sauce. Perhaps they had been given a hint to that effect, the better to excite their zeal.

"Although it was hardly yet light," says Minutoli, "the fact of our arrival was known at once. On every side we heard cries of 'Here is the enemy!' One after another the windows and shutters were pushed ajar, and we saw more than one fair lady in her morning *négligé*. We assured the inhabitants repeatedly that we wished them no harm, and would respect their persons and property, but that they, for their part, must keep quiet. And so at last they calmed down, and began to exchange remarks from window to window, 'They are good fellows; they do no harm to anyone.' Several ladies were even kind enough to invite us into their houses to have a cup of chocolate or coffee. It went to my heart to be unable to accept, but it would have been a bad example to our men. All this time the number of interested passers-by was increasing in the streets: many of them mingled with our men and offered them drinks. . . .

"Captain de Haas and Lieutenant de Welzieu, who had been commissioned to arrest Drouet [*Sauce*] in his house, had found the nest empty, for the postmaster had left for Paris the very day before. But his wife and *his daughters* were there. While Captain de Haas was having the house searched by his men Madame Drouet [*Sauce*], yielding to an unaccountable panic, flung herself into a well. The captain, who was instantly informed of this accident, ordered a long ladder, which fortunately happened to be near, to be brought to the spot, and told an old non-commissioned officer of hussars to take a lantern and go down into the well to save the wretched woman, if indeed it were possible. This bold attempt was crowned with success. *Madame Drouet* [*Sauce*] *had only fainted. A doctor was quickly summoned. He gave her every care, and soon brought her to life.*"

When the invasion was repulsed, Sauce reappeared at Saint-Mihiel, gloomy, disabled, and wretched. There is still existing a portrait of him of this date, in which his features at the age of thirty-eight are those of an old man. His eldest son, who was in the 1st battalion of the Meuse, had just been made second-lieutenant after four months of service. Three of his children were still with him, and on the 15th

HOUSE IN WHICH SAUCE DIED, PLACE DES HALLES, SAINT-MIHIEL.

March, six months after his wife's death, he was married again at Saint-Mihiel to a lady called Marie Barbe Jacquot,[1] who was a year older than himself. He settled down with her in the house where his first wife had died, and walked every day, with his slow step and bent figure, to the registrar's office of the tribunal. On summer evenings he continued his walk as far as the Allée des Capucins, without going near anyone or speaking a word, as though he were resigned to being a pariah. Those who saw his long, serious face without knowing who he was said to themselves, "That is a man who has been through great sorrows." But he was known throughout the region of the Meuse—almost famous indeed, with an evil kind of

[1] Parish Registers, Saint-Mihiel. There was one son of this marriage, Victor Scipion, born June 15th, 1798. He was a judge at Saint-Mihiel, married there, and died in 1866. He had had a son—a lawyer—and a daughter, who both died childless.

fame that had much in common with the notoriety that once weighed so heavily on the local executioner in a provincial town.

His eldest son did not appear again for twelve years. He returned in 1804 as a captain; in 1812 one hears of him as a major at the headquarters of the *Grande Armée*, and in 1816 he returned to Saint-Mihiel on half-pay and made his home with his father, who was still alive, no less gloomy and no less uncomplaining than twenty years before. The youngest son had enlisted in the police force, and the daughter had married. The reprobation by which the father was so greatly oppressed does not seem to have been extended to the children, but for Sauce pardon and forgetfulness never came. In 1820 there was at Saint-Mihiel an old *emigré* who had returned from Swabia after twenty-five years of misery, and the idea occurred to him to chase from the town the man who, as he imagined, "was the original cause of all our sorrows." There were those, it is said, who approved of the scheme, and it is possible perhaps that it appealed to the officials of the day as a means of showing their zeal. But the placid resignation of Père Sauce disarmed them. Ever afterwards, however, when he saw "those gentlemen" walking under the lime trees of the Allée des Capucins, he beat a retreat in the fear of being insulted, and went off sadly to sit on the banks of the Meuse.

He died[1] in his house in the Place des Halles on the 24th October, 1825.[2]

[1] Parish Registers, Saint-Mihiel. "1825, Oct. 24, at one o'clock in the afternoon, in his house in the Place des Halles, died Jean Baptiste Sauce, formerly registrar of the criminal Court of Justice of this department, born at Varennes March 4, 1755, widower of Dame Marie Jeanne Fournel, and husband of Dame Marie Barbe Jacquot."

[2] Sauce's house in the Place des Halles is now No. 8 (432 in the official register). The well into which Madame Sauce fell is still to be seen, between it and the house (426 in the register) that faces the Rue Neuve.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL RADET[1]

THE civil burial of Pope Pius VI., who died at Valence as a prisoner of the Directory on the 12th Fructidor, year VII, will one day be numbered among the most surprising freaks of history. France as a whole, however, concerned itself very little about the matter, which was so much in character with the levelling spirit of the times that there seemed to be nothing incongruous in it; and it is quite certain that there was no affectation of cynicism nor any sarcastic intention in the behaviour of Citizen Jean Louis Chauveau, municipal officer of the commune of Valence, when he certified the death *of the said Jean Ange Braschi, Pontiff* by profession, according to the formula commonly used for every ordinary citizen. When the public think they can detect an element

[1] Here we have but one source of information: a volume of 750 pages entitled *Mémoires du Général Radet, d'après ses papiers personels et les archives de l'Etat, par A. Combier.*

The author, a retired magistrate who died several years ago, was the grand-nephew and heir of the general. He had devoted long years of his life to studying the life of Radet, both in the papers that had been bequeathed to him and in the Archives of the War Office and Foreign Office. A more complete and conscientious monograph does not exist. The book was printed in 1892, but we believe that only a very small number of copies was produced; indeed, we doubt if it were ever offered for sale. It was printed by Belin Frères at Saint-Cloud, but there is no publisher's name upon it. M. Combier in his preface makes it plain that his ambition was not great; he only aspired to *place this work upon the dark shelf in some of our public libraries, and there to let it sleep.*

This is the valuable volume that we have consulted in writing this chapter. We only obtained a few insignificant hints by consulting Radet's *dossier* in the Archives of the War Office, and the *dossier* of Radet's trial in Jan. 1794, which is preserved among the records of the tribunal of Saint-Mihiel.

of logic in the sequence of political events, they submit without complaining, being indignant only when they are taken by surprise. No doubt this is why the very people who were so indifferent to the misfortunes of Pius VII, when he was treated by the Revolution like a common "suspect," were filled with sincere pity ten years later, when Napoleon caused Pope Pius VII, who had crowned him, to be removed from Rome. It seemed incomprehensible that, having so authoritatively set up the ancient order of society once more, he should kill it with one blow; and as the public did not dare to vent their indignation on the master, they relieved themselves by anathematising the general who had carried out the task at his behest.

Against General Radet, then—for this was the officer's name—there rose a sudden storm of condemnation. This name, which had never figured in the despatches of any great victory, became an object of execration, almost of horror—the name of a pariah. Pious women breathed it to each other in awe-struck voices, crossing themselves as they spoke: "Radet, you know, *the man who carried off the Pope!*"

A precipitate judgment of this kind, founded on a combination of ignorance and political passion, it is impossible to overthrow. A myth is invulnerable when it is, by unanimous consent, promoted to the dignity of a truth; and this Radet, who was condemned to be unceremoniously labelled by history as *the man who carried off the Pope*, will always be regarded as one of those incorrigible Jacobins who still survived to recall the exactions of the year II, a brutal and coarsely irreligious veteran, a belated *sans-culotte* lingering on in the Imperial army, unpolished, swaggering, vulgar, and uneducated.

Never was fancy farther from the facts. This Jacobin was a fervent royalist; this impious wretch had a gentle soul, profoundly Catholic and somewhat mystical; and, by an aggravation of irony, this soldier, this slave of passive obedience, was only a soldier by accident.

For indeed the ordering of his life from first to last was a jest of fate. Other men went in search of adventures; Radet tried to avoid them—but the adventures came in search of

him! In 1791 he was a rich and respected *bourgeois* of the little town of Varennes-en-Argonne. Although this town was in appearance and proportions hardly more than a village, it was in a certain sense a capital, being the seat of the Clermontois Tribunal, and the dwelling-place of a bishop, as well as of a number of magistrates, notaries, solicitors, attorneys, retired officers, Directors of Woods and Forests, and intendants, who formed a society of some cultivation and more or less fashion, such as was often met with in the smallest towns of the France of other days. Étienne Radet, the son of an intendant of the Prince de Condé, was born quite near here at Stenay, and being attracted by the charms of its society, had settled at Varennes. In November 1789, when he was twenty-seven years old, he had married a girl from Avocourt called Marie Rose George, who was comfortably endowed with money and real property; whereupon he bought a large and fine estate at the entrance to Varennes on the Clermont side, known as the House on the Hill. The house was a kind of *château*, with three salons panelled all round, high doors, armchairs of lacquer covered with tapestry, glass chandeliers, a terrace, a shrubbery, a sloping garden with a river at the bottom of it—all the pleasures of life, in short. Radet settled down there as a country gentleman, quite determined to live quietly, and, being a man of no ambition, to spend the rest of his days there in peace. As he was a cultured and well-read man, and an agreeable conversationalist, the Varennois had received the new-comer warmly. Knowing that he had made a voyage to the West Indies and had served in a regiment of infantry—a youthful vagary in which he indulged when his father married for the second time—they appointed him lieutenant of the Clermontois constabulary, a sort of local militia. In addition to this he was warden general of the forests of the province, and finally was elected commandant of the artillery of Varennes, which possessed two ancient and useless culverins without gun carriages. These posts, which were more or less sinecures, brought him no money, but secured him a great deal of respect and one or two little privileges. It was by the help of pastimes of this kind that the dwellers in towns found it

possible in those old days to endure provincial life, in spite of its quietness, its utter absence of variety and movement, its resigned and sleepy apathy.

Radet, then, at the age of thirty, was one of the *bourgeois* to whom it was impossible that anything should happen, when on a certain night of June in the year 1791 he was suddenly awakened out of his sleep by the sound of violent blows upon his door. It was half past twelve. While he was on his way to open the door he heard the sound of the tocsin ringing at St. Gengoult's and the roll of a drum that was beating to arms in the lower town. There was a fire, no doubt.

At the door he found Raillet, lieutenant of artillery, who informed him of the overwhelming news: "The King, the Queen, and the Dauphin are at Varennes! The artillery must be called out quickly to protect the royal family against a possible attempt to carry them off."

Radet collected his men, who had come out of the town hall with the two guns. The latter were at first mounted at the upper end of the town, but afterwards, by order of the municipality, they were placed before Sauce's house at about one o'clock in the morning. At this moment Choiseul's hussars and Damas's dragoons, about sixty men altogether, came into the town, which was already overflowing, as has been described, with the peasants who were attracted from all parts of the neighbourhood by the sound of the tocsin. This enormous throng crowded into the narrow street in front of the grocer's shop where the royal family were confined. Radet understood that a delay of an hour would be the King's undoing. He was heard to give an order to the people of Montblainville, who were guarding the bridge over the Aire, "to allow the King to pass, since he wished to go to Montmédy"; but the peasants sneeringly refused; whereupon Radet insisted, saying in conciliatory tones, "Let us allow the King to pass; it will be all the better for Varennes." Upon this the peasants grew obstreperous; one of them brought his bayonet to the charge, and another flourished his pitchfork. The excitement was great, and Radet retired towards the Maison Sauce.

The yard behind the shop opens on the lane of La Vérade, a narrow alley that runs between garden walls and leads to the fields. The forest of Argonne is quite close to it. Radet thought that six resolute men, while the crowd was swarming and screaming in the streets, might help the King to escape by this lane, take him to the woods, and finally conduct him safely to Bouillé's camp. He suggested this scheme to M. de Damas, who was standing at the door of the shop and forthwith took Radet into the house, where the municipal officers, all the judges of the tribunal, all the authorities of the district, and many others had established themselves. It was Choiseul to whom Damas submitted Radet's proposal. Choiseul leant out of the window above the lane to examine the spot, and spoke of the plan to the King, who refused to listen, being persuaded that the whole affair arose from a misunderstanding, and that he would be allowed to continue his journey in perfect liberty. The atmosphere of the room was stifling. Radet left it at about two o'clock, and attempted at all hazards to get the horses harnessed to the berline; then returned to the bridge, which was still guarded, and tried to rally the hussars, whom the peasants were plying with drink, and who were now crying "To Paris!" with the others.

The hours passed: the crowd increased continuously; ten thousand people were blocking up the streets; all hope of saving the King was gone. In the morning, when the emissaries of the Assembly appeared, bringing with them the decree that recalled Louis XVI to Paris, Radet again tried to gain time. The King, being informed of the devotion of this one man in all Varennes, begged him to take charge of a casket containing articles of value, which he did not wish to expose to the chances of the return journey, and instructed him to send it to the princes who had emigrated. Radet accepted the charge respectfully. This episode is obscure, for although there is no doubt as to the bare fact, the details are confusing.[1]

[1] There is no doubt that Radet sent a valuable box to Monsieur (afterwards Louis XVIII)—but what box, and when was it sent? Was this the box referred to by Cléry in his Memoirs and by Madame Royale in her

Radet fulfilled this mission; but ever after this famous night he had many enemies, for the royalists of Varennes owed him a grudge for their inaction, while the patriots regarded him as being "sold to the Court." The whole population meanwhile was in a state of alarm, for there was a persistent rumour that Bouillé had sworn to sack the guilty town, and even the names of those who were to be hanged were given. By the spring of 1792 many of the inhabitants, including Sauce himself and all his family, had fled. The Prussians and the *emigrés* were at Thionville, and spoke of marching on Paris and "making an example of Varennes" on their way, a threat which gave promise of fearful reprisals. Those who could not leave the country clamoured loudly for help. Radet was appointed commandant of the National Guard, partly because he was brave, but chiefly because he alone had dared to take the King's side at the time of the arrest, and it was hoped that this fact might serve to cajole the enemy. In March, as the general alarm was increasing, he was elected major for the sub-district: when the danger was imminent he became adjutant-general for the entire district.

As a matter of fact, Varennes was in great danger, and it required much courage to undertake to protect it. Verdun had capitulated. On the 5th September Radet, having gone to Avocourt, saw the Prussian scouts in the distance on the Esnes road. He hastily returned to the town, stopped the threshing operations, shut up all the barns, and took his wife into the woods with his two boys and a considerable number of distracted Varennois; after which he returned to await the enemy, who arrived on the following day, and were after all fairly moderate in their demands. The Prussians were followed by a corps of Austrian cavalry. Radet in his own person represented all the authorities of the town. While he was supplying the requirements of the invaders he took

Narrative? The casket to which they allude contained the King's seal, a ring of the Queen's, and the hair of the whole family. It was taken to Hanover, to Monsieur, in 1793.

The general makes it plain in his manuscript notes that it was in 1791, from Varennes itself, that he sent to Monsieur the box given to him by Louis XVI.—See *Mémoires du Général Radet*, p. 35 and note 21.

ÉTIENNE RADET.
From a Miniature in M. Bernard Franck's Collection.

advantage of his relations with them to move freely about their camp, to penetrate even into Verdun, and to establish a correspondence with the French generals quartered at Mare, near Grandpré, and on the hill of Biesme. His life at that time was as full of adventures as a novel; he was to be seen on the road disguised sometimes as a merchant, sometimes as a peasant; on other occasions he played the part of an *emigré*. He explored in all directions with the enterprise of a bush-ranger, looking into everything, working even with the Prussian staff—in danger every moment of being discovered and shot—and training *climbing* agents, whom he hid in the foliage of the trees, as the sentinels of old Gaul were hidden, to watch the movements of the enemy. He even succeeded in recruiting a flying battalion of women, who carried the information he had collected to the French camp. All the peasants of the country, too, kept open house in their desire to help these patriotic missionaries, whose co-operation resulted in the victory of Valmy; and all through that day of Valmy, while the battle lasted, Radet stood by Kellermann's side, for General Dillon had chosen him for his aide-de-camp as a reward for services rendered to the French army.

When Verdun was retaken and the foreigners repulsed, Radet refused both promotion and pay. He had but one wish: to return to his home, and with his wife and children to take up again the peaceful life for which he believed himself to be most fitted. But very soon he was obliged to own to himself that Varennes had lost all its charm. The new organisation had deprived the little community of its legal members: *society* had emigrated, and the municipality was in the hands of a few fanatics, who, fancying themselves under the eyes of all Europe, posed as Spartans and *purged* the population. Radet was displeasing to them, and especially to a certain brewer called Féreaux, who owed him 1,700 francs. Féreaux fulminated against the general in the public-houses. "He is only fit for the guillotine," he said; "he is a traitor, a spy, a scoundrel, a thief, a sham patriot, worse than an *emigré*." He accused him of having on the 21st June 1791 "bribed the National Guard of Montblainville to assist in the flight of Capet," but this had little effect.

Then Féreaux revealed the fact that "this turncoat had handed over to the enemy a herd of cattle in a field," and this time Radet was arrested. A month later—in January 1794—he appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal of Saint-Mihiel, where in the person of the registrar he recognised Père Sauce, who had taken refuge there at the time of the invasion. It was an unpropitious moment, for the Terror was at its height; and while Radet was being tried in a room of the old Benedictine Abbey, he saw the people outside crowding round the guillotine, to watch the knife being fixed in its place.

He escaped, however, but though he was acquitted, he thought it safer not to tempt fate by returning to Varennes. But where should he go? The various camps were at that time sure asylums for those who took shelter in them without aspiring to rise to the highest ranks; and Radet therefore joined the the army of Guise, with the intention of remaining with it for a few weeks—during one campaign perhaps, till the bad times came to an end, as must surely happen soon.

"He who goes off for a year thinks that he goes for a day," says the legend of the *beau Pécopin*, who left Bauldour, his betrothed, to follow a mysterious cavalier to the court of the reigning Count of Anhalt-Kirbourg. The latter, delighted with the beautiful appearance of Pécopin, sent him as a deputation to the Elector of Bavaria, who charged him with a mission to the Duke of Lithuania, who hurried him off to the King of France, who despatched him to the Grand Turk, who finally sent him to the devil. When Pécopin returned from this last journey a century had gone by without his being aware of it, and the toothless Bauldour loved him still. Here we have the whole history of Radet. Gillet, the representative of the people, appointed him brigadier-general to the Army of the North, whence he despatched him as chief of constabulary to Avignon, where Bonaparte, on returning from Egypt, was so much struck with his behaviour that he sent him to Corsica, whence he recalled him to Milan to approach Prince Eugène, who despatched him to Prince Joseph, who first entrusted him with the arrest of Fra Diavolo, and then sent him to his sister

in Tuscany. Here, in June, 1809, he received an order from the Imperial headquarters at Vienna to repair to Rome by forced marches, with four hundred mounted men of the constabulary. At Rome a terrible task awaited him. On arriving there on the 4th July he learnt from General Miollis, the governor of the town, that his orders were to seize the person of the Pope, who was guilty of having uncere-moniously excommunicated the Emperor. Cardinal Pacca, the adviser of the Holy Father, was to be arrested at the same time.

This time Radet, as he admits himself, was taken aback. He returned to the Rospigliosi Palace, where he was living, and "shut himself up to think." Never had he so keenly regretted Varennes, and the House on the Hill, and his blos-soming orchard, and the quiet fields beside the Aire. He was "oppressed by painful feelings, mingled with fear," for he had always been a religious and even a devout man, if one may judge by a prayer that he composed, and he was obliged to face the cruel alternative "of either outraging the most sacred rights, or of violating his vows by disobedience." The result of his meditations was that he returned to Miollis. The latter, who was extremely anxious to transfer the re-sponsibility of this compromising performance to someone else as soon as possible, pointed out to him "that a soldier was above all things obedient, passive, and responsible"; upon which Radet, having nothing to answer, turned upon his heel and retired to plan his method of attack. Pius VII was living at this time in confinement in the Quirinal, with no troops but a few Swiss Guards. He was an old man in weak health, broken down, and always ailing.

On that very evening Radet made his arrangements. As soon as night fell detachments of constabulary and foot-soldiers were seen going through the streets of Rome with the heavy step and sinister appearance of troops marching without drums or music. The streets leading to the Quirinal and the bridges across the Tiber were silently occupied. The hermetically sealed and barricaded palace was asleep, or seemed to be so. At thirty-five minutes past two in the morning of the 7th July Radet gave the

order of attack. While a detachment of thirty men escaladed the walls of the garden with the object of reaching the subterranean passage from the Sainte Chapelle, Colonel Siry, followed by fifty men, entered the building through the window of one of the offices. As for Radet, his intention was to invade the palace from the roof, but two ladders broke in succession, which created some confusion. As the clock was striking three a bell in the Sainte Chapelle began to ring the alarm, and instantly voices were heard to cry "*All'arme! Traditori!*" It was necessary to break open the door, and this was beginning to give way when Siry, who was now inside the building, opened it from within, and the soldiers entered the courtyard.

Radet, followed by twenty men, ascended the staircase, and by the faint light of the early dawn passed through one deserted room after another till he reached the vestibule of the throne-room, where the forty Swiss Guards who composed the entire papal army were gathered together. These yielded up their arms at the first summons, and as a few soldiers were all that were needed to keep guard over them, Radet pursued his way. He pushed open the door of the huge throne-room, which was nearly dark and quite deserted. At the farther end of it, without a guard, was the closed door of the Holy Father's rooms. Radet, half choking with emotion and not daring to open the door, knocked. No answer. He knocked again; not a sound: then, steadying his voice, he asked in the name "of the Emperor his master" to be allowed to enter. As the silence was still unbroken, he stood there in a state of great agitation, wondering what he should do, when he became aware of the sound of a key being placed in the lock from within. The door then slowly opened a little way, and a tall young priest appeared. Radet asked his name: "Pacca." "His Eminence?" "*No, sono il nepote*—no, his nephew." "Where is the Cardinal?" With a bow, the young priest silently stood aside, and Radet, taking a step forward, saw at the end of a little corridor of moderate width a room "in which there were lights and some people standing." He bared his head instinctively, and approaching the threshold saw the Holy

Father in his pontifical robes seated at his bureau, surrounded by a few venerable ecclesiastics.

The general paused, in great distress. His men had followed him, and now in his perplexity he dismissed them by way of doing something to cover his confusion, keeping with him only the officers and non-commissioned officers, all of whom silently entered the papal chamber, hat in hand. This "manœuvre" occupied five minutes and gave Radet time to collect his faculties. He went forward then at last, bowing profoundly, with his hand upon his heart, saying "how it grieved him to the heart to fulfil a mission of so painfully severe a nature. . . ." The Pope interrupted him: "Why do you come at this hour to disturb my rest? What do you want?" Radet announced his sovereign's will, to which Pius VII answered, "Nevertheless I forgive him,—and everyone! You will surely allow me two hours?" The general was obliged to answer "that the power to do so was not in his instructions," and the Holy Father, resigning himself, took up a book that lay on his bureau, and rose. Radet went forward to support him, and "was so much moved, so strongly affected by a feeling of veneration," that he could not resist taking his hand and kissing it devoutly.

They then started on their way through the rooms of the palace, Radet holding Pius VII by the arm, and Cardinal Pacca following, escorted by an officer—down the grand staircase, across the court, to the Monte Cavallo gate. Here the Pope paused for a moment and looked out upon Rome. It was four o'clock in the morning; a radiant day was just beginning; in the square there was not a single passer-by; in the windows there was not a single face to be seen; only, drawn up in order of battle, stood the rows of troops, absolutely silent, absolutely motionless, blockading the Quirinal. Pius VII raised his hand, and gave them his benediction.

A moment later he was borne away in Radet's berline surrounded by a body of constabulary, on the road to Florence.

. . . . . .

When a man has figured in two dramas of so much importance as the flight of Louis XVI and the removal of

the Pope from Rome, he may surely feel satisfied and have no further ambition. The impresario who arranged for Radet's performances, however, had still several sensational parts for him to play. He was created a baron, and was further gratified by the grant of an entailed estate situated in Hanover, of which he never heard again; he received a coat of arms representing a lion holding a sword and looking at a star, and also the right of putting his servants into "a livery of blue, red, and yellow"; but this did not save him from being sent hither and thither, from north to south and from east to west, without being allowed the time to breathe. From Rome he went to Hamburg without a pause; then, at a word from the Emperor, from Hamburg to Amsterdam. He was just beginning to enjoy himself there when he had to start off to Mayence, whence he was despatched to Saxony; then to Lutzen, Leipsic, and Mayence again. Finally, in 1814, as in 1792, he suddenly found himself defending the slopes of Biesme and the forest of Argonne against an invading enemy.

After this came a time of half-pay and disgrace; then he was deprived of his rank and dismissed from the army. He had served the Empire only half-heartedly, and yet the sudden inactivity seemed oppressive to him when he was obliged to return, almost as an outcast, to the quiet little town that he had left twenty years before. His two boys had died young, but his wife was waiting for him there, surrounded by seven orphaned nephews and nieces whom she had taken into her house, and two old servants, Colin and Marguerite, who had never left the place since 1789, and had managed the property. The general quickly recovered his taste for a rural life: fishing, hunting, and agricultural experiments occupied his days, and in the evening he visited his neighbours, for Varennes had regained a certain amount of its former attractions. A literary society was formed, which met three times a week at the house of the Mayor, and of this Radet was a member. In the winter there were two balls and some dinner parties; and, moreover, the people of Varennes did not forget to celebrate the memory of Louis XVI in a grand funeral service in the church, when all the

inhabitants of the town were observed to be greatly moved by the absolution—and more especially those who through the night of June 21st, 1791, had been most valiant in crying "To Paris!" under the windows of the Maison Sauce.

But politics and the attendant stir and bustle were things of the past. Radet was hardly more than fifty years old, his health was perfect, and he thought himself quite safe from adventures, when on the 12th March 1815 a neighbour of his, named Giroux, came to show him a newspaper that had arrived that morning and declared that Bonaparte, having landed near Antibes, was marching victoriously to Paris. This was indeed overwhelming news! The days that followed were passed in feverish agitation till the 22nd, when it was officially announced that the King had fled and that "everything was to begin all over again." Radet could not stand aloof: he packed his box, and on Good Friday, the 24th, he left Varennes at two o'clock in the afternoon, arriving in Paris at ten in the evening of the next day. Before six o'clock on Easter Day he was hurrying through the streets to the Tuileries, "where the crowd was stifling." He saw the Emperor, and in the throng was addressed by him in a sentence of which Radet "could distinguish nothing but his name," but at this one half-audible word the old racketing life began again. Radet was despatched to the south. He started for Roanne, passed through Lyons, and arrived at Pont-Saint-Esprit, where to his amazement he heard that the Duc d'Angoulême was at the Mayor's house, and that he, Radet, was to proceed to arrest him. First the Pope, and then the Dauphin of France! For a man who was a royalist and a Catholic this was sheer cruelty on the part of fate. The affair, however, was decorously carried out. Radet, having surrounded the house with his men, presented himself before the prince, who, together with the gentlemen of his suite, followed the general without a word of reproach. "He was dressed like a private individual, without decorations or distinctive marks, and wore upon his head a little cloth cap of which the best that can be said is that it was common." The party

left the house on foot, the general holding the arm of the Duc d'Angoulême as he had once held the arm of the Holy Father, "while all the doors and windows were filled with people who were giving loud expression to their feelings of sorrow." The journey was performed in a carriage, and lasted all night. On reaching Cette, on the following day, Radet escorted the prince to the ship that was to take him into exile, and then resumed his life of travel. He was seen at Lyons, at Laon, at Avesnes, at Charleroi, at Waterloo, at Bourges, at Tours; and it was from the latter place, on the fall of the Empire, that he once more took the road to Varennes. This time it was surely the end.

Not at all. A few days after the execution of Marshal Ney, on the 1st January, 1816, Madame Radet received a gown from Paris as a New Year's gift, in a fold of which she found an unsigned note addressed to the general: "Take steps to protect yourself from a sudden attack and a search. I mourn with you. Do not lose courage. Hope!" Radet was urged to fly, but he refused, and on the 4th January he was arrested. The police who had invaded his house were rifling his drawers throughout the night and seizing his papers, and at dawn on the 5th, in the presence of the Russian soldiers who were occupying Varennes and had been looking on—gravely and quite uncomprehendingly—since the day before, at what was taking place at the house of "this fine fellow," he was put into a berline and taken to Verdun. He only stayed there for two hours. On the same day, escorted by constabulary, he started for Besançon, where he arrived on the 10th. He was closely confined in the citadel to await his appearance before a court-martial.

No one breathed a word to the general as to the reasons for his imprisonment, but his correspondence shows plainly that he had no illusions on the subject. He was arrested, not for having served Bonaparte during the Hundred Days—that was but the pretext; he was attacked, partly because he had removed the Duc d'Angoulême, but chiefly because he was *the man who carried off the Pope.* After six months of torment he was brought to judgment on the 25th June; the members of the court-martial dared not have him shot, but

they unanimously condemned him to nine years' imprisonment, which he was to undergo in this same citadel of Besançon. The Governor at this time was M. le Chevalier de Sécillon, an old *emigré* who had been a state prisoner for a long time during the reign of the usurper. He only allowed the prisoners four hours a day of exercise in the yard. "That is enough," he said; "under Bonaparte I had no more." Such was his rule of conduct.

And now a touching fact must be recorded. When Radet had become a pariah, kept in close confinement, reduced to despair, deserted by all; when many who might have saved him did not even dare to mention his name for fear of compromising themselves, Pope Pius VII, who was restored to Rome, informed the prisoner that he had just made restitution to him of the property of San Pastor in the Papal States, which the general had bought some time before, and where a religious community had illegally established itself since the Restoration. This expression of sympathy on the part of the old man whose wrongs the Bourbons professed to be avenging was doubtless not unconnected with the request for a pardon which the Duc d'Angoulême had the good feeling to address to the King in favour of Radet, who thus owed his liberty to his two *victims*.

The prison doors were opened on January 4th, 1819, and on the 17th the general returned to Varennes, this time to leave it no more. These first days were for him and his family days of rejoicing; but he was unrecognisable; captivity and injustice had broken him down. Ever afterwards he was gloomy and taciturn, and it was in vain that he tried to take up his active life again, for he knew himself to be hated by a section of his fellow-townsmen. The insidious legend was spreading, and those who exhibited Sauce's shop to travellers pointed out also the House on the Hill as a place of evil omen: "That is the house of the man who carried off the Pope."

Radet, they say, never left his own grounds, but walked sadly to and fro upon his terrace, "devoured by remorse." When the ragamuffins of the town, in their curiosity to investigate the mystery, climbed upon each other's shoulders to

reach the top of the wall, and cast a hurried glance into that terrible place—the garden of the man under a curse—they saw the old *Jacobin* walking slowly, pensively, despondently, with the air of a man who neither sees nor hears.

One day when he was walking thus—it was the 28th September, 1825—he stopped suddenly, his head fell forward, and he dropped upon the ground. He was dead. "A judgment from Heaven," said the pious, and the unjust legend became stronger than ever.[1]

[1] This is the epitaph that may still be read in the cemetery at Varennes, on a grave of plain black marble: "Here lies the Baron E. Radet, Commander of the royal order of the Legion of Honour, Lieutenant-General of the King's armies, formerly Inspector-General of Constabulary, born at Stenay on the 19th of December 1762, died at Varennes on the 28th of September 1825. His widow and his adopted children have erected this monument to his memory. Pray for him."

CHAPTER XII

THE ADVENTURES OF DROUET

In appearance Jean Baptiste Drouet was robust and florid, with a decided and rather stern manner. He was more feared than loved at Sainte-Ménehould, it would appear, having in his voice and bearing the coarse roughness that was so easily mistaken in the days of the Revolution for heroism, and even for genius. He combined courage, enterprise, and tenacity with cunning and boastfulness: full of subtlety when scheming was advisable, and of humility when it was necessary, he was, it was quite evident, predestined for an adventurous life; a man whom one cannot imagine living by his own fireside in winter, or in his arbour in summer, or dying in the house where he was born.

He was twenty-eight years old in 1791,[1] and was generally known as *Cadet* Drouet, to distinguish him from his elder brother, who was nicknamed Drouet *Fumier*. Their father, notwithstanding all that has been said, was never a postmaster; that office was acquired by our Drouet in the year 1788, or near it, at the time of his marriage with Jeanne Le Bel.[2]

[1] He was born at Sainte-Ménehould on the 8th of January, 1763, his parents being Joachim Nicolas Drouet, wood merchant, and Marguerite Raulin. The father died when the child was but seven years old, but Mère Drouet only died at Sainte-Ménehould in the year X, and therefore lived to see the "glory" of her son. She had several other children: Louis, Jean Baptiste's elder brother, born in 1750, died in 1833; and two daughters, of whom one married J. B. Vauthiers, a landowner in La Marne, while the other was a nun of the Augustine Order at Nancy.

[2] Drouet had three sons and a daughter. The eldest, Claude François, was born Oct. 23, 1789. The three sons died childless; the daughter in 1813 married an ex-captain called Charinet, who was *décoré*, and for some days was sub-prefect of Sainte-Ménehould after the return from Elba.

It is quite easy to account for his time during the famous night in which he suddenly became known to history. He sprang into the saddle at nine o'clock in the evening of June 21st, and arrived at Varennes at about eleven; we find him in the lower room of the *Bras d'Or* inn at the reading of the passport, with Madame Brunier and Madame Neuville trembling close at hand; but he did not appear at the window of the royal berline nor yet in the Maison Sauce. Indeed, he must have left Varennes as soon as the King was identified, for he reappeared at Sainte-Ménehould at four o'clock on the morning of the 22nd, bearing the news of the arrest.[1] To go from Sainte-Ménehould to Varennes and back again one must traverse fifteen leagues of road. Drouet evidently went by the side roads, since there was no indication at Clermont of his having passed through that town on either journey; but none the less his time had been energetically employed. Indeed, it would seem as though this man were not subject to fatigue at all, since by six o'clock in the morning he was again riding off to Clermont to meet the King, and to make, at the head of the procession by which the prisoners were escorted, a triumphal entry into Sainte-Ménehould.

If this mad ride of his determined the fate of the royal family, it was destined to react upon the life of Drouet himself in a way that was no less tragic. By the evening of the 24th he was in Paris, and was introduced triumphantly by the municipality to the Assembly,[2] who voted him a reward of

[1] Official Report of the Municipality of Sainte-Ménehould.

[2] National Assembly. Sitting of the 24th June (about nine in the evening):—

The President.—Two deputies of the Commune of Paris ask to be heard. They are at the bar, and have brought with them the two citizens who took the first steps towards the King's arrest. (*Yes! Yes!*)

M. Dacier, one of the deputies, then began to speak as follows:—Gentlemen,—The General Council of the Commune has deputed us to introduce to you the citizens who, at Varennes, prevented the King from continuing his journey. Once Paris might have regretted that they were not born within her walls, but to-day all Frenchmen are brothers, and when one of them performs a fine action the glory of it is reflected upon the whole family. (*Cheers.*) This is M. Drouet, postmaster of Sainte-Ménehould, who, thinking he had recognised the King and Queen, was the first who determined to run after them by a cross-country route, and overtook them at Varennes. This is M. Guillaume, his comrade, a clerk in the

30,000 livres from the nation. His portrait was engraved, and millions of copies were sold. A month later his name was known by the whole of Europe.

As a deputy to the Convention Drouet voted for the King's death[1] *sans sursis*—without delay. In October, 1793, being with the Army of the North, he was taken prisoner under the walls of Maubeuge by a flying squadron of Austrians. Two years later, from the rostrum of the Council of Five Hundred, he told the story of this adventure himself:

"Francheville, who was in command at Maubeuge," he said, "declared that the town could not hold out long, and that it was necessary that some reliable man, capable of carrying his point, should make his way through the Austrian lines and take information to Paris of the critical situation of the place.

"I felt that it would be for the infinite advantage of the Republic that I should undertake this enterprise. Did I perish, my death would inspire the soldier with a longing for

service of the department, who accompanied him, and with him took all the measures that resulted in putting an end to the King's journey. M. Drouet will ask the Assembly's permission to describe all that he witnessed and did in connection with this affair. (*Yes! Yes!*)

The President.—M. Drouet, you have our permission.

And Drouet began to speak, quite calmly, quite at his ease. Then suddenly he broke forth into that special kind of eloquence which later on he was so often to display on the platform of the Convention. His speech, as reproduced in Vol. XVII of the Parliamentary Archives (p. 508), is clear, precise, and, so to speak, rough; one feels that the orator is prepared to back up every word he utters with a blow. This peasant was not in the least intimidated by the solemn trappings of the Assembly; he went straight on, arranging his narrative methodically and forgetting no picturesque detail or amusing phrase. There is no doubt that the deputies felt themselves to be in the presence of *someone*. Drouet's triumph was great. He was repeatedly interrupted by cheers. When he had finished the President took up the tale. "The National Assembly," he said, "has received you with the enthusiasm that is due to citizens so zealous for the public weal, to men who have perhaps saved France from a disastrous war. The Commune of Paris regrets that you were not born as her son, but all France claims you for her own, since it is she that has been saved by you. The National Assembly undertakes to recognise the services that you have rendered to the country, begs to assure you of its satisfaction with your conduct, and invites you to take part in the present sitting."

[1] On the 7th of July, 1793, Drouet, as a member of the Committee of Public Safety, visited the Temple prison with his colleagues Maure, Chabot, and Dumont. This was the first time that Marie Antoinette had seen Drouet, for he did not appear before the royal family during the night at Varennes.

revenge and would increase his energy twofold; did I succeed, I should bring new life into the neighbouring country, I should hastily collect food, forage, the needful ammunition, and above all, men: then I should fall upon the enemy, after having made signals that would be audible from the town. I should be able to save Maubeuge and the Republic.

"I took a hundred picked dragoons, and on the 2nd October, at midnight, I went forth into the Austrian lines. We had agreed to go very slowly and in a compact body, for fear of plunging in the darkness into the enemy's trenches. Unfortunately, we could not avoid passing in front of a camp of infantry: the whistling of the bullets and the reports of the guns made our horses start off at a gallop. What I had foreseen occurred: we fell into a trench. Several of the dragoons were, with myself, unhorsed. I picked myself up and seized the first horse I saw; but a dragoon who had lost his entreated me not to desert him in the midst of the enemy. I allowed him to mount behind me, but the horse, being young and fiery, became very lively. Five minutes passed, and now my escort had advanced too far for me to be able to see in the darkness the direction in which they had gone.

"There we were, then, the soldier and I, surrounded by the enemy. A few steps farther on we met a patrol of the enemy's, composed of five hussars. The dragoon suggested yielding, but I charged, shouting: *Follow me, dragoons!* The enemy retired, but almost at once returned in greater numbers. It being necessary to fly, I put spurs to my horse, and soon fell into a deep ravine, where I became unconscious. The hussars found me, and slashed me with their sabres; then they carried me away, nearly dead. When I came to myself I described myself as a French officer. My wounds were dressed with tolerable care. Afterwards I declared myself to be a representative of the people; and when it was known that I was the Drouet who had stopped Louis XVI at Varennes I was ruthlessly ill-treated. When I asked for some bread after fasting for forty-eight hours, a young officer said to me, 'Be off, rogue! It is not worth while to give you any for such a short time!'

"I was thrown into a cart. The *emigrés* especially

loaded me with insults. Prince Collorédo, before whom I was taken, told me that the French were faithless, for they had just sent against La Vendée the garrison of Mayence, who had promised not to serve against the Emperor again during this war.

"Soon after this I was taken before General Latour. I was loaded with irons, and covered with wounds, and in a state that at all events witnessed to my courage and should have won some consideration from a soldier. This man struck me twice heavily in the stomach with his fist, and when I fell he spat in my face. 'I am defenceless,' I said, 'and you insult me! Let these chains be removed if you dare, and give me a sword. Wounded though I am in several parts of my body, you would not dare to look me in the face.' He became more furious than ever, and the guards took me away.

"I was dragged away then. I was thrown half naked upon some straw, with my feet and hands in irons, in a damp and poisonous cell. I remained there for some months."[1]

There is always a piquant pleasure in revising autobiographical documents, and by a happy chance we are able to compare Drouet's narrative with that of the Austrian officer who arrested him. He was called Baron Ferdinand de Stetten, and took notes day by day of his "impressions of the war." A number of the note-books have been lost, but that of October, 1793, which is numbered 14, still exists, and in it are the following lines:—[2]

"The captain in command having been severely wounded, I was commanding the squadron that had been sent to the outposts, and as we were being perpetually harassed by the enemy, I was unable to sleep, and was writing my report on the last affair. At about midnight we still had a good fire, and I set to work to write to Max[3] as well. Then the idea came into my head to ride out with a certain number of my men to reconnoitre in the direction of a little copse that

[1] *Le Moniteur* of the 28th Nivôse, year IV.

[2] We owe this extract to M. Ferdinand Bac, grandson of Baron Ferdinand de Stetten. We hope that M. Bac will accept our most sincere thanks.

[3] M. de Stetten's cousin.

seemed to me suspicious. We had hardly gone the distance of a hundred paces when I saw a man near a tree hastily mounting his horse. I cried *Werda?*[1] He discharged his pistol at me, and began to shout to a troop of about sixty soldiers who were behind him, '*À moi!* Here are the Austrians!'

"With our white uniforms, when we had no cloaks with us, we were always conspicuous from a distance; and some of my men were not wearing cloaks that evening. We saw that this detachment was intending to surprise our outposts by advancing cautiously, but their numbers were not considerable. They attacked us with great violence in order to force their way through, but after a lively resistance I succeeded in scattering the greater number; and their leader, and some of his men who had been disarmed and dismounted, were handed over to me as prisoners. The officer was not wearing a complete military uniform. He had a green cloth coat, like an ordinary citizen's, with the epaulets, waistcoat, and hat of his profession, as well as the breeches and boots. I questioned him as to this peculiarity, and he said the reason was because the other coat was being dried.

DROUET'S SEAL.

"A short time afterwards the following fact was reported to me. One of my men had given some schnaps-and-water to one of our prisoners who had received a sword-cut and could only walk with difficulty. He had confided to my man —for he understood something of his language—that his chief was some one notable who had been very much talked about, but he did not know his name. I had not yet had him searched. I went up to him and asked his name. He answered something that I could not understand, and I informed him that he was to be searched, and saw it done on the spot.

"He then told me voluntarily that he was called Drouet. This name, which I knew in connection with the sad circum-

[1] *Qui vive?*

stances of the flight of the King of France, reduced me to a state of the deepest emotion. Nothing very important was found upon him but some recent orders, a triangular medal of yellow metal, a silver watch with three cases and some patriotic emblems, a bronze seal for sealing letters, and some onions in one of his pockets. My men tried to maltreat him, and even in their exasperation to kill him where he stood. I used every means to keep them quiet, and I had the greatest trouble to protect him. Although my authority throughout the campaign had never been called in question, and my soldiers were altogether devoted to me, we had a very serious disagreement on the subject of this man Drouet, and I was obliged to push my horse right up in front of him, making it plain with all the earnestness at my command that he was to be taken alive to the Archduke, who would dispose of him in the proper way; and I threatened to have the men shot in camp if anything else were done. But it was with the greatest difficulty that I got him safely to the camp, by protecting him the whole time with my horse and my sword. On arriving in camp I was warmly congratulated by my superior officers, and after the examination of the prisoners, at which I assisted, some of our men were lashed up and flogged. Drouet thanked me warmly for having saved him from death, and bore witness in the presence of my commanding officers to the service I had rendered him. He asked permission to give me his watch, but I declined to accept it, saying that it would be useful to him. Then he gave me his bronze seal, which I always kept with great care, and was often begged to show.

"The next day Drouet was taken off under a good escort to Spielberg, near Brünn."

Drouet's capture was a great grief to the patriots, and the whole of France shuddered at the story of the tortures that the Austrians inflicted on "the man of Varennes." They had, it was said, shut him up in a cage, with his head and hands fixed in a pillory; and here he would have died of hunger if he had not been saved by an old man—Gérard Meunier—the father of ten children, who at the risk of his life took some food to the prisoner. The most amazing thing

in the affair is that, a year later, the victorious French discovered at Brussels the iron cage in which Drouet had been tortured. It was brought to Paris, and Barère begged "that it might be hung in the Hall of the Convention"; but the deputies were not particularly anxious to carry on their deliberations under such a heavy machine of Damocles, and preferred the suggestion of Sergent that the contrivance should be placed at the feet of the statue of Liberty in the Place de la Révolution. Here it was guarded by a veteran whose office consisted in repeating from time to time, "Citizens, such are the benefits that are being prepared for you by tyrants."

Gérard Meunier received 6,000 livres in cash, and a pension of 1,500 livres, revertible to his ten children.[1]

The cage apparently was pure invention. On the 6th October, 1793, Drouet had arrived at Brussels with a strong escort, on his way to Brünn, and he had been lodged, well guarded, first at the public Treasury[2] and afterwards at Sainte-Elizabeth. There was a great sensation among the *emigrés* who were living in the town. Fersen lost no time in going to see "his rival," and these two men, who were unknown to each other, but had engaged with equal zeal in the most romantic duel in history, stood face to face for the first time. Drouet doubtless had no suspicion that this gentleman who came to see him was the instigator and organiser of the royal flight, and Fersen for his part suppressed the furious resentment that half choked him at the sight of this rustic who had defeated him and was now defeated in his turn. But on that same evening he wrote the following words in his journal—words too valuable not to be quoted *verbatim*:—

"*Sunday the 6th.*—Drouet arrived at eleven o'clock. I went with Colonel Harvey to see him in his prison at Sainte-Elizabeth. He is a man six foot tall, from thirty-three to thirty-four years of age, who would be fairly good-looking if he were not such a villain. He had irons on his feet and

[1] See *Le Moniteur*, 27th Fructidor, year II. See also in the *Moniteur* the report of the sitting of the Convention of the 2nd Vendémiaire, year III.

[2] *Moniteur* of Oct. 30th, 1793.

hands. We asked him if he were the postmaster of Sainte-Ménchould who had stopped the King at Varennes, and he told us that it was he who had been at Varennes, but that it was not he who had stopped the King. He never opened his overcoat, for fear of showing the chain that fastened his right foot to his left hand. The sight of this infamous scoundrel filled me with rage, and the restraint I put upon myself to say nothing to him, because of the Abbé de Limon and the Comte FitzJames, who were with us, was really painful to me."[1]

Three days later the Swedish nobleman writes again:

"Drouet was taken yesterday to the house of the Comte de Metternich, where he was questioned. He began by declaring that he would answer everything, but that if he knew of a weak side of Maubeuge which might facilitate the capture of the town, he would not tell of it. . . . With regard to the King's arrest, he said that it was the postmaster of Châlons who came to tell him that M. de Romeuf arrived there an hour after the King, so greatly fatigued that he could not go any farther, and had informed him that the King and his family were in that carriage, and that someone at Sainte-Ménehould ought to be told to run after them and stop them.[2] That he (Drouet) had started off, and had arrived at Varennes three-quarters of an hour before the King; that, guessing there would be some hussars there, he had dismounted at the inn that he usually frequented,[3] and had, as he expected, found some there; that a bodyguard had arrived a moment later to warn them;[4] that he had then gone to warn his friends, and had barricaded the bridge. He gave no other details as to the arrest, which was carried out by the municipal body and in which he took no part, having carefully avoided appearing before the King, and having never

[1] *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, Vol. II., p. 93.

[2] Drouet's version, then, was this: Romeuf arrived at Châlons at about five o'clock (one hour after the berline had passed through), and sent Viet the postmaster of Châlons, to warn Sainte-Ménehould. The upshot of this very important evidence is that, according to Drouet—by some means whose details he knew nothing of, unless Fersen misunderstood them—the news of the flight travelled along the road *one hour later* than the royal family themselves.

[3] Evidently the *Bras d'Or*.

[4] The hussars.

shown any lack of respect towards him. That he had not accompanied the King, and had been in no way wanting in respect towards him; that he had arrived in Paris a day before the King.

"With regard to the King's death, he said he had voted for it because he believed it was necessary, like the death of Jesus Christ; and moreover, what had decided him was that the King was accused of being the cause of the armies entering Champagne, since everything was done in his name and for him.

"He is a man of no education, but it is thought that he writes better (than he speaks), for he said several times that he could answer the questions that were put to him better in writing. He said that everything he did he would do again." [1]

A month later, after a rough journey across Germany, Drouet was imprisoned at Brünn, in Moravia, in that fortress of Spielberg that was to be made famous later on by Sylvio Pellico.

Through the window of his cell Drouet was able to see a little corner of the landscape: the last houses of a suburb, some gardens, a little river, with a boat moored under the willows. He pictured himself free, unfastening the boat, drifting with the current to the Danube, and thence reaching Constantinople; and the most fantastic scheme of escape grew up in his adventurous mind. The Spielberg fortress crowns a precipitous rock, and the prisoner's idea was to descend to the plain by *the help of a parachute!* He set to work at once. His clothes, sewn one to the other by means of a carp's bone, and the wood of his bedstead cut up into thin laths, furnished the materials for the contrivance, with which he twice experimented successfully in his cell. How did he baffle the watchfulness of his jailers? The story is full of improbability; but is there not a touch of extravagance in the lives of all these men of the Revolution, who had vowed themselves, it would seem, to the pursuit of the unexpected and the impossible? It is at all events a fact that one night Drouet, having sawn through his bars and unfurled his apparatus, took the leap—closed his eyes and sprang out. The fall was terrible. He dropped upon the rock from a height of two

[1] *Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, Vol. II., 94.

hundred feet, breaking his bones as he fell; and as the sentries had fled in a panic before this fearful-looking machine as it issued from the side of the fortress in the night, the wretched man lay in tortures at the foot of the walls until daybreak.[1]

[1] It was thus that he described the adventure later on to his colleagues:—

"All my dreams were of ways to escape. I had been carried off to Luxembourg, to the fortress of Spielberg, in Moravia. It is situated on the little river Schwartz, which flows into the Danube. From my window I could see a little boat that I ardently longed to run off with. By drifting with the current I should have reached the Danube, and from the Danube passed into the Black Sea, whence I hoped it would not be impossible to get to Constantinople. But to reach the boat it was necessary to break the bars of my window and fling myself on to a terrace, whence, to reach the plain, I should have to hurl myself over a precipice, for the terrace of this fortress, which stood upon a precipitous bluff of rock, was two hundred feet above the plain.

"I began by tearing out the rod that held my curtains, and also two strong eye-bolts a foot and a half in length, with which my bars had recently been strengthened. I also soon succeeded in loosening my bars, which I replaced in such a way that my labours could not be detected. At last I was possessed of the means of leaving my room; the next thing was to find out how I could leave the fortress, how I could reach the bottom of that precipice two hundred feet in depth, where moreover several sentries were placed at intervals of two hundred yards. I had no means of procuring ropes. I decided to construct a parachute, for the soldiers, when they saw a great bulky object descending from the skies, would run away, and I should make a dash for the much-desired boat.

"I set to work at once. I tore up cotton caps and stockings, and so made myself some thread. A fishbone served me for a needle, and with pieces of cloth sewn together and supported by bits of wood torn from my cell I succeeded in making myself a sort of parasol. The ceiling of my room was high and had a cornice eight feet from the floor, from which I often flung myself to the floor with my machine without feeling the slightest shock. I persuaded myself that out of doors the greater resistance of the air would support me better. . . .

"At last everything was ready. The 21st of June, 1794, had come, the anniversary of an era famous in the annals of the Republic and in the history of my life. I chose that day for my escape. . . . An illness prevented me from carrying out my design, and it was during the night of the 6th of July that I took it in hand. I opened my machine and tore out my bars, which were only apparently fastened. Twice I attempted to launch myself upon the air, twice an invisible power seemed to hold me back, for nature, seeing my destruction so near, recoiled from obeying the dictates of my heart. At last I took several paces backwards, then, rushing at full speed with my eyes closed, I precipitated myself into the depths of the abyss.

"The rapidity of my fall was such that I cried out at once, *I am a dead man.* But I was mistaken; all that I felt at first was that one of my feet was quite numb. A wall was in front of me, and I wished to rise in order to get over it, but my foot, which was broken, prevented me, and I began to feel great pain. It became so acute that I screamed aloud."—*Le Moniteur* of the 28th Nivôse, year IV.

Drouet's story was printed, sent to every commune in France, and translated into every language.

He was taken back, dying, and put in a more secure cell. At the end of six weeks he was on his feet again; at the end of six months he was free. Of all the members of the royal family who had travelled in the berline that was stopped at Varennes none survived but the daughter of Louis XVI; and this child was the price demanded by Austria for Drouet's liberty. The exchange was made; and I do not think that the greatest dramatists have devised any more striking chain of contrasts and incidents than this.

The ex-postmaster, once more triumphant, returned to Paris, and on the very first day, amid the cheers of the Council of Five Hundred, he told the story of his amazing adventures. For the second time he was at the summit of fortune; but he did not stay there long, for before six months had passed he was a prisoner for the third time. Having compromised himself in the conspiracy of Babeuf, he was imprisoned in the Abbaye, but escaped by a chimney-flue and hobbled off through the streets, walking very slowly on account of his leg, which was only half healed. He was overtaken by some soldiers who were pursuing the fugitive, who asked the same man "if he had not seen a prisoner running away as fast as he could." "No," he answered; "and besides, I don't make it my business to stop escaping prisoners." Upon which the soldiers went on their way.

On the following day Drouet contributed a detailed account of his escape to the *Journal des hommes libres*.[1] Then he crossed the frontier into Switzerland, embarked at Genoa for India

[1] The letter to the *Journal des hommes libres*, tridi, 3rd Fructidor, year IV, was written to "save trouble to all the anecdotists." Drouet describes how, on the 22nd Floréal, "as soon as he was thrown alive into the tomb," he went into his cell and got up the chimney; "an iron grating stopped him, but on it he found a bundle of rope, a saw for cutting iron, and several other tools." The Abbaye apparently was not a carefully inspected prison. After working for eight days he succeeded in escaping by this chimney and the roofs. He was "obliged to stop in a dark alley to tidy himself up a little, and brush from his dust-stained clothes the marks of his escalade." This delay, and "his half-healed leg, which prevented him, whether he liked it or not, from appearing much hurried," gave time to a patrol to catch him up. He answered them as we have seen. "This is my latest conspiracy," adds Drouet, "for I do not doubt that the *chouannerie* will find evidence of conspiracy here too. And on this occasion, at all events, I have given them the advantage of seeing me in the very act."

under the name of Martiny, landed at the Canaries, where he fought against the English when they attacked Teneriffe, returned to France after the 18th of Fructidor, and received a new indemnity of 30,000 francs as *a victim to the hatred of kings and of their incorrigible partisans*—which did not prevent him from accepting shortly afterwards from the Emperor the sub-prefecture of Sainte-Ménehould and the title of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Napoleon, as he fastened the cross on the chest of the ex-postmaster, said to him, "M. Drouet, you have altered the face of the earth."

This was why, when the Empire fell, the Restoration did not forgive him. On the King's first return the retired postmaster had simply been deprived of his office of sub-prefect; but after Waterloo, as he was considered to have contributed to the usurper's return, he was treated as a "dangerous character." Long before the regicides had been banished by law a search for him was instituted. The order to "run him down" is dated October 24th, 1815, and the police of M. Decaze made it a point of honour to catch the "infamous Drouet," for such was the epithet sanctioned by the letters of the Government. They expected to capture him at No. 31 Rue des Fossés Saint-Marcel, where, according to the statement of the Duc d'Havré, who was not above making himself into a police agent for the occasion, the ex-Conventionist had set up a printing press for revolutionary writings; but no one was found there but his youngest son, Victor Auguste Drouet, who declared that he did not know what had become of his father. This disappointment only whetted the zeal of the Government, and at the end of 1815 the whole staff of the Commissioner of Police, the special agents of M. Decaze, the military police, the prefects of the Meuse, of the Ardennes, and of the Marne, the sub-prefects and *parquets* of Sainte-Ménehould, Verdun, and Saint-Mihiel, and all the brigades of constabulary, were occupied in tracking the regicide; not to mention Dr. Normand, a worthy physician of Sainte-Ménehould, who brought to this chase even more zeal than the officials, seeing that his wife, *née* Christine Mencke, had left him for the ex-Conventionist.

Drouet, according to various sources of information, was

said to have taken refuge at Bar with his relations the Demoiselles Lebel, or at Rambluzin with his former colleague Courtois; he was sought successively at Triancourt, at Maugarni, at Vavincourt, at Lavoye, at Vienne-la-Ville, at Corrupt, at Neufour, and at Le Bois d'Espense. To track Drouet had become a sport to which the police devoted themselves with the tenacity of the persistent gambler. Their efforts resulted in the discovery of Claude François Drouet, ex-captain of constabulary, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, the second son of the "infamous postmaster." He was packing his boxes for a journey to Brazil, and for two years had heard nothing of his father, with whom he had quarrelled.

And if the police were half demented on the subject, the peasants, who were much entertained by the perpetual disappointments of the authorities, did not fail to mislead them. The wildest information was seriously received, and the people delighted in despatching the police to ransack some old abandoned quarries near Sainte-Ménehould; or in sending them down among the reservoirs of the Abbey of Beaulieu, where it was known for a certainty that the regicide was in hiding; or in organising battues in the most inaccessible districts of the forest of Argonne. A woman called Belval-Piesvaux led the police to a little hovel in the depth of the woods, whither, she said, she carried food every day to the outlaw. When the men had been blockading the hut for twelve days the woman Piesvaux unblushingly confessed that she had received twenty francs from Drouet *Fumier* "to play this trick upon the agents of the police." The Prefect of Police, having come to an end of his resources, even thought of ostensibly discharging an honest constable called Garnier, a discreet and trustworthy member of the force, who by this means might be able "to worm himself into the confidence of the ill-disposed." Finally, a respectable priest of Nancy, the Abbé Dégrelette, gave the information that a sister of Drouet's, a nun of Saint-Charles, had confessed that the ex-Conventionist had died at Sainte-Ménehould in a house that she was unable to indicate, and that he had been buried in a cellar. This settlement of the matter, whether it were true

or false, saved the honour of the police. It was accepted eagerly, and the affair was entered in the register, to the great content of all the authorities, prefects, mayors, and magistrates of the Eastern district, who for two years had been robbed of their sleep by it.[1]

Drouet, however, was not dead. He had remained hidden in Paris until the end of 1815, and had obtained possession of the passport and of a copy of the baptismal certificate of a certain Nicolas Sévérin Maërgesse, a mechanic who like himself was born at Sainte-Ménehould, but of Liégois parents. Furnished with these references and disguised as a carter, Drouet went to Saint-Denis, where he hired himself out as an ostler to an undertaker of military funerals, and while there he engaged himself as a master gaiter-maker—for he knew all trades—in the service of the Legion of the Hautes Alpes, with whom he started for Briançon. At the end of eighteen months the fictitious Maërgesse, feeling sure that he was now secure from suspicion, sent in his resignation and settled down at Maçon with a German woman who passed as his wife. This was none other than Christine Mencke, a native of Creuznach, the lawful spouse of Dr. Normand, who was at that time hunting for her in all the villages of the district of Sainte-Ménehould. Christine in 1817 was forty years old; she was clumsy and ugly, and a very strong German accent made her conversation nearly unintelligible.[2]

Monsieur and Madame Maërgesse settled first in the house of a certain Sieur Violet, a tanner, on the Quai de la Saône, and afterwards hired a lodging at No. 23 Rue Municipale, in the house of Sieur Louis Thibert. Maërgesse was not communicative. He had described himself as a "mechanic and distiller," and accordingly in March 1817 he established at Charnay, in partnership with Sieur Dumoulin, a distillery for manufacturing alcohol from vine-shoots, which only worked for six months—precisely the length of time necessary for Maërgesse to obtain a certificate of residence from the

[1] With regard to this search see *Une campagne policière sous la Restauration*, by André Lesorts, keeper of the records of La Meuse. Extract from the Transactions of the Society of Letters, Science, and Art, of Bar-le-Duc, 3rd Series, Vol. X.

[2] *National Archives*, Fr. 6712.

Mayor of Charnay, on the strength of which he secured a passport for the country round Lyons and the Jura. In the following year a fresh passport, procured by presenting the first, enabled him to undertake a second journey, to Bourg, Cognac, Lisieux, Charleville, and Sèvres.

Returning to Maçon, Maërgesse resumed his isolated life. He saw no one but Goyon, formerly Mayor of the town, but now removed from that office, once an ardent patriot whom all Maçon had known by the nickname of *Goyon-la-Nation.* In 1822 Goyon, on his way to Lorraine, passed through Sainte-Ménehould, from whence he brought back to his friend Maërgesse 2000 francs.[1] The people who made it their business to know everything declared that Maërgesse had a patron in Paris who often sent him little sums of money. And, indeed, it was not hard to guess that there was some mystery in the life of this taciturn, suspicious man, who avoided all social gatherings and showed himself as seldom as possible. He was regarded as "a survivor of the great upheaval." In those strange days, when the overdue accounts of the Revolution were being balanced, there were so many people who had once been rich and were now ashamed of their poverty, so many new millionaires embarrassed by their riches, so many *emigrés* out of their element in the France they had left twenty years before, and unrecognisable to all alike, whether victors or vanquished, that either from respect for undeserved sorrows, or from indifference to misfortunes that were only too common, very little attention was paid to the case of an unknown man who kept quiet and claimed nothing.

Maërgesse therefore did not excite curiosity for long. This lame man with the cunning eyes and tangled hair, without relations and without ambition, was evidently some one quite ordinary. His wife made plain pastry, which she retailed at the window of the ground-floor, and sold to the housewives of the quarter. Every morning at his doorway Maërgesse split the wood into sticks and diluted the paste for the waffles. Who would have suspected that this resigned creature, so humble in appearance and so bent in the back,

[1] *National Archives*, Fr. 6712.

was the fiery Conventionist whose romantic epic had staggered the world?

And he himself—what did he think? What did he expect of the future? Did he not look for some new turn of fortune's wheel? As he was afraid of appearing anywhere, and of compromising himself, he took in no papers and never went to a café. He was therefore dependent on the gossip of his neighbours, and knew nothing of politics; his hungry imagination, having nothing to feed itself upon and being overwrought from its long fast, created disasters and dreamt of impossibilities. He was one of those—and they were many at that time—who, every night as they went to sleep, said to themselves, "It will be to-morrow," confident that the daylight would bring them the news of the fall of the Bourbons and the retaliation of the proscribed party. What depths of anxiety must have been hidden in the commonplace question, *What news?* which he asked every morning in his indifferent voice of the neighbours he met on the stairs or of the clients of Madame Maërgesse.

By dint of much scheming he succeeded in making acquaintance with the valet of an aged gentleman whose house was but a few steps distant from his own shop. He heard that this old man's sight was very weak, and the idea occurred to him "to get himself recommended as a good reader." The *ci-devant* sent for Maërgesse, took him on trial, and finally engaged him. Drouet at last saw the daily papers.[1] Every day he went to read the *Quotidienne* and the *Gazette de France* to the old royalist, for none but the ultra-white journals were allowed to come near this gentleman, who, when he had been gratified by hearing at length of the smallest actions and movements of the *august family* and of the ceremonies of the Court, asked again and again for the eloquent diatribes which Martainville and Genoude launched against the pestilential brood to whom France owed all her troubles.

By means of patient stratagem and constant concession Drouet-Maërgesse persuaded the old noble that it would after all be very edifying to hear the pitiful answers of the revolu-

[1] *Notes Historiques*, by Marc-Antoine Baudot, ex-member of the National Convention.

tionists to these thunders of anathema, and in this way he led the inveterate legitimist to take in the *Constitutional* and the *Minerve*. Thus the outlaw was enabled to regale himself with the refreshing prose of the liberal journals, at the same time taking every care to hide his enjoyment. For as soon as they had been read the determined royalist, who lost his temper with great regularity, insisted on the papers being destroyed in his presence, lest the poisonous infection should contaminate minds that were less proof against it than his own. And thus, with the hands that stopped the royal carriage and hurled the monarchy to destruction, the regicide was obliged to burn, in the very presence of a gloating *ci-devant*, the papers that seemed to him to be the last—and very feeble—breath of the Revolution to which he had sacrificed his life.

A wise man once advised those who disbelieved in God to make a detailed study of His action in the narrow sphere of an individual life, where undeniable evidence of His existence at once becomes obvious. The case of Drouet supports the view of this philosopher, for chance alone, excellent dramatist though it be, is incapable of devising such a punishment as this, ingeniously combining as it does the sublime and the ridiculous.

The old nobleman, like many another, instinctively abhorred the Revolution, because it had been "effected without sufficient grounds," and had "upset many customs." No doubt Maërgesse was often obliged silently to endure his imprecations against the "author of all our ills"—"the audacious bandit, the infamous Drouet," whose crime had brought so many disasters in its train. One day, when the royalist's tone had been more bitter than usual, the pride of Maërgesse rose in revolt, and he let slip the words, "Nevertheless, *he broke up the ground.*" Then, as the old man pricked up his ears, he again assumed his humble manner and gave a fresh turn to the conversation by saying "that he had been a gardener, and had even taken lessons from a famous English landscape gardener." The old *seigneur*, whose favourite dreams were of lawns and romantic plantations, installed his reader in his country house. Drouet had travelled

much and seen many things: he planted groves, scooped out dry river-beds, and raised little hills two feet high,[1] in return for which he was well lodged, well fed, sheltered from all intrusion, and certain of a peaceful future—which others perhaps would have declined on the same terms. If he had been a proud man he would often have thought of those of his colleagues who were living in exile, with a proud look and an empty stomach, carrying themselves haughtily under the blighted name of regicide.

When the winter came Maërgesse returned to the town. The defeat of the Spanish Cortès distressed him so much that he fell ill. It is plain that if his real name was unknown to the authorities he had nevertheless revealed it to a few intimate friends, for in February 1824 a certain Madame Chaledon wrote to Madame Husson, a sister of the Conventionist, who had come from Sainte-Ménehould during the preceding year to spend a few days at Maçon: "Your brother has been ill for a week. The doctor told us that he did not consider him to be out of danger. He is at present very weak, but the state of his stomach is good. I heard him say that he did not wish any member of his family to be told of it except yourself."

Two months later, in the afternoon of the 11th of April, the woman Maërgesse appeared at the *Mairie*. She stated that Maërgesse had died at ten o'clock that morning, and that he had charged her to reveal that his name was not Maërgesse but *Drouet*, and that he was the regicide who had been so long sought by the whole police force of the kingdom. The poor woman's distress, combined with her accent, resulted in a wild document being drawn up in which the former Conventionist was described as Jean Baptiste *Troué*, native of *Menoue*.[2]

Much as the authorities would have liked to blind themselves to the fact, they were forced to recognise that the man in question was really the ex-Conventionist and regicide, and that he had eluded their vigilance to the end. The gentleman whose reader he had been nearly died of shock and horror. The letters that passed between the prefect and the

[1] Baudot's *Notes Historiques*. [2] *National Archives*, F7, 6712.

Minister are almost comic, so great was the disappointment on both sides that the "infamous Drouet" should have carried his insolence to the point of dying unpunished. It is even said that a thought was entertained of wreaking vengeance on the corpse; but the wrath of the most zealous was assuaged more or less by harassing *Goyon-la-Nation* a little—though he swore by all his gods that he had never known the real name of his friend—and by catching at Sainte-Ménehould the woman Normand, formerly Maërgesse, who was kept in close confinement for several days. She was given her liberty on confessing that all Drouet's papers were at the house of a Madame Grouillet, whose address she did not know, but who lived somewhere between Paris and Versailles. A fresh search followed, which lasted for two months. It was fated that Drouet, even after his death, should baffle the ingenuity of the police. When they succeeded in discovering Madame Grouillet at No. 1 Rue du Grand Montreuil they learnt that one of the Conventionist's nephews, Louis Vauthiers, a captain of artillery quartered at Vincennes, had already visited her and had carried off all the papers, which he had hidden in a safe place.[1] They included Drouet's correspondence from the beginning of his public career—a correspondence that was both copious and valuable for reference. These papers, it is declared, have not been destroyed.

[1] *National Archives*, F7, 6712.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FATE OF FERSEN

At Bondy, as day was breaking at three o'clock in the morning[1] of the 21st of June, the Comte de Fersen watched the royal berline rolling away on the road to Metz. His part was played. After so many days of agitation, after the last few feverish hours, he found himself standing before the posting-house, alone with his coachman Balthazar Sapel. The morning was cool; the day promised to be fine.

Balthazar, who was holding the Count's five horses, of which one had carried Valory and the four others had drawn the berline, "asked his master for orders"; upon which Fersen told him "to go to Valenciennes, to the barracks of the Royal Swedes." The Count then asked for the horse that had carried Valory, sprang into the saddle, and prepared to ride away. Balthazar ventured to demur, pointing out that he had no passport.

"If you mention the name of the Comte de Fersen, Colonel-Propriétaire of the Royal Swedes, you will be able to travel without being stopped."[2]

Then he added that as he went through Le Bourget, Balthazar would find there the horse that he, Fersen, was then riding, and that he might sell it, as well as one of the four—the black—that had drawn the berline. By doing this he would only have three to take back to the regiment, and would by this means obtain some money—five or six hundred

[1] Fersen writes in his journal: "At half past one at Bondy, at three o'clock at Le Bourget." He is at variance by at least half an hour with the depositions of the other actors in the flight.

[2] Deposition of Balthazar Sapel.—Bimbenet, *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 60.

livres—"which he might keep in part payment of his wages, while awaiting a settlement."

Fersen, having given these instructions, started off at a trot in the direction of Le Bourget, which was the first stopping-place on the road to Valenciennes. In spite of the agonies he was no doubt enduring in his anxiety to know whether the King's departure were as yet discovered, the Swedish nobleman thought it more prudent not to return to Paris. In less than an hour and a half he reached Le Bourget. procured a carriage, and went on, leaving his steed in the stables, to be found there an hour later by Balthazar, who had come across country with his four horses.

The road that Fersen now followed was one of the best in France, and was, moreover, familiar to him. At eight o'clock in the morning he was at Senlis, at midday he reached Compiègne; at about two o'clock he changed horses at Noyon, and two hours later at Ham. He arrived at Saint-Quentin before six, and there he turned into a by-road. Between Maretz and Le Cateau he met with a check: the commandant of a village militia stopped his carriage and demanded his name. "I was alarmed," writes Fersen. He continued his journey, however, and reached Le Cateau without further misadventure, passed through Landrecies and the forest of Mormal by night, and changed horses at Le Quesnoy at about midnight. It was very cold. In order to avoid the posting-house at Valenciennes, where he was known, he took the road to Bavay, the last French posting-house being not then in that town, but at Saint Waast. By six o'clock in the morning Fersen was at Mons.[1] At that precise moment Bayon and Romeuf, in Sauce's house at Varennes, were presenting to the King the decree that made him a prisoner.

The town of Mons, where a number of French had taken refuge, was in a great state of agitation. During the night the King's brother Monsieur had arrived, and also Madame, in another berline and by a different route, as well as Madame

[1] Fersen's journey was accomplished even more slowly than that of the royal family; he did not cover more than two and a half leagues an hour.

de Balbi. The news of the King's flight had been quickly spread by them, and the whole community of *emigrés* was overjoyed. "Many French people are greatly pleased," writes Fersen. "A monk in the street asked me if the King were safe."[1]

By this time, according to the calculations, the royal family should have been in safety at Montmédy, and Fersen was anxious to join them without delay. Without taking any rest, he continued his drive at eleven o'clock in the morning. His journal is very laconic here. "Level country as far as Namur, then mountains. Everyone pleased that the King is safe."

Fersen, though he says nothing of it, must have slept at one of the posting-houses on the road—at Ciney perhaps, ten leagues beyond Namur—resuming his journey on the next day, the 23rd of June, for it was only on that day that he reached Arlon at eleven in the evening. At the posting-house he came upon Bouillé. What! Bouillé at Arlon? Yes—the King is taken. Oh, horror! "There is not very much known yet as to details. The troops did not do their duty. The King was wanting in firmness and presence of mind. I rested there."[2]

He did not rest for long. Having reached Arlon a little before midnight, he left it again at half-past four in the morning, after having written two letters.[3] He records

[1] Here are two notes that Fersen wrote at Mons. The first is addressed to his father, Field Marshal the Comte de Fersen: "*Mons, 22nd of June, 6 o'clock in the morning.*—I have this instant arrived here, my dear father. The King and his whole family left Paris successfully on the 20th at midnight. I drove them as far as the first posting-house. God grant that the rest of their journey may be equally fortunate. I am expecting Monsieur here every moment. I shall continue my journey at once along the frontier, so as to meet the King at Montmédy if he is fortunate enough to get there. —Axel Fersen."

The second note was to the Baron de Taube: "*Mons, 22nd June, 11 o'clock in the morning.*—My dear friend, the King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and Madame left Paris at midnight I accompanied them as far as Bondy, without any mishap. I am off this moment to join them.—Axel Fersen."—*Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, Vol. I., p. 189.

[2] Fersen's Journal.—*Le Comte de Fersen, etc*, Vol. I., p. 3.

[3] The first was to the King of Sweden: "*23rd June midnight.* Sire,—everything has failed. Sixteen leagues from the frontier the King was arrested and taken back to Paris. I am going to see M. de Mercy. . . . etc." The other was to his father: "*Arlon, 23rd June, 1791, midnight.*—All is lost, my dear father, and I am in despair. The King was arrested

that all along the road "everyone is sorry that the King is taken." He is "horribly sad." He thinks bitterly how happy he would be at that moment if he had saved them; and then there falls from his pen—usually so sober in expression—that poignant word in which every disappointed soul recalls its vanished dream: "How different!"

At Namur, where he arrived at midnight, he met Monsieur. He secured a brief interview with Louis XVI's brother, and then started again. By one o'clock in the morning he was on the road, and reached Brussels at two in the afternoon. For five nights and four days he had been driving without intermission, but no matter; he had no thought for his own fatigue; he took no rest, but hurried to see Mercy, to the Hôtel Bellevue, to the Comte d'Artois, to the Archduchess. "There is no sort of order here; they all behave like lunatics; a thousand false rumours." It was only on the 28th that he obtained some reliable information. "News from Paris—the King's return. Barnave and Pétion in the carriage. Horrible! No cheers."

It was not till the first days of July that this line from the Queen reached him: "Do not be uneasy about us. We are alive. . . ." And on the next day there came another, dated June 29th. "I am alive . . . how unhappy I have been about you, and how I pity you for all that you are suffering on account of having no news of us! Heaven grant that this may reach you. Do not write to me; that would be dangerous to us, and above all do not come here on any account. It is known that it was you who helped us to escape from here; everything will be lost if you appear. We are watched day and night, but it makes no difference to me. . . . Be easy in your mind; nothing will happen to me. The Assembly wishes to treat us kindly. Farewell . . . I shall not be able to write to you again. . . ."[1]

at Varennes, sixteen leagues from the frontier. Imagine my misery, and pity me. It was M. de Bouillé, who is here, who told me this news. I am starting this moment to take the letter and orders with which the King entrusted me to the Comte de Mercy at Brussels. I have only time to assure you of my respect and love.—Axel Fersen."—*Le Comte de Fersen et la Cour de France*, Vol. I., p. 140.

[1] The dots indicate words carefully erased by Fersen.—*Le Comte de Fersen*, Vol. I., p. 152.

He saw her once more, however, seven months later, in February of the following year. He succeeded in making his way into Paris under a false name, in a courier's coat, with a great peruke upon his head, and slipped into the Queen's apartments "by his ordinary way." He returned the next day, and again the day after. But no record can compare in value with the rapid notes in his diary, and nothing can be added to the words in which the warmth of his emotion can still be felt.

"*Saturday, February 11th*, 1792.—I started at half past nine in a courier's chaise with Reutersvaerd, without a servant. We had a courier's passport for Portugal, under fictitious names, the letters and the memorial from the King [of Sweden] to the King of France, addressed to the Queen of Portugal, which I had put into an envelope of the Swedish Ambassador at Paris with a false monogram counterfeiting the King's signature, and another, also counterfeited, to Bergstadt, the *chargé d'affaires*, signed Franc; the whole fastened with a seal bearing the arms of Sweden, made here. I had also, for my own security, a letter of credence as Minister to the Queen of Portugal.

"*Monday, 13th.*—Very fine and mild. Started at half past nine. Stopped for two hours at Louvres to dine. Arrived without mishap at Paris at half past five in the evening, without anything being said to us. I set down my officer at the Hôtel des Princes, Rue de Richelieu. Took a cab to Goguelat's house in the Rue Pelletier. The cab did not know the street. Feared should not be able to find it. Another cab pointed it out to us. Gog was not at home. Waited in the street till half past six. Did not come. I became uneasy. Wished to join Reutersvaerd. He had not been able to get a room at the Hôtel des Princes; they did not know where he had gone. Returned to Gog's house: not in yet. Made up my mind to wait in the street. He arrived at last at seven o'clock. My letter had only arrived the same day at midday, and they had not been able to find him earlier. Went to the Queen; passed in by my ordinary way; afraid of national guards; did not see the King.

"*Tuesday, 14th.*—Very fine and mild. Saw the King at six

o'clock in the evening. He will not go away, and indeed cannot, because of the extreme vigilance; but it is perfectly true that he is too scrupulous to do so, having promised so often to remain here, for he is a good fellow.

"Mlle. de Rocherette was Gouvion's mistress, and told him everything. She only had suspicions. Being questioned the day after the escape, she said horrible things about the Queen. Being asked if she had not heard footsteps going through that door, and if she had not been afraid to stay still and warn no one—she said that she heard footsteps there so often after the King had gone to bed that they did not strike her as anything out of the way. For some time the guard had often been tripled, and was so on that day the 20th of June, after dinner. M. de Valori, who had been told in the morning that he was to be sent as a courier with his two comrades, told Mademoiselle his mistress, who was also mistress of M. ——, a violent revolutionist. In passing through the Grand Carrousel the Queen sent M. de ——, who was with her and did not know the way to the Petit Carrousel, to ask the sentry of the mounted guard where it was. At Châlons they were recognised: a man informed the Mayor, who took the line of telling him that if he were certain of the facts he had only to publish them, but that he would be responsible for the consequences. The bodyguards were good for nothing. On the return journey M. de Dampierre, who had come to see the royal family, gave his arm to one of the Dauphin's waiting-women to help her into the carriage. She warned him to go away, as the people would be angry. He said no. He mounted his horse, and fifty paces farther on he was shot on the plain like a rabbit: when he had fallen from his horse they killed him, and came back to their carriage with their hands covered with blood, carrying his head. The Queen gave a piece of beef *à la mode*, which I had put into the carriage, to a man; a voice said, 'Don't eat it. Don't you see they want to poison you?' She ate some of it at once, and gave some to M. le Dauphin. La Tour-Maubourg and Barnave very well behaved: Pétion indecent. The first would never drive in the King's carriage: he said that the King could rely upon him, but that it would be interesting to win the others over.

"Mlle. Rocherette was Gouvion's mistress, and told him everything. Several times before the flight she had searched the Queen's pocket-book. They were from six o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, from Meaux to the Tuileries, without daring to lower the blinds or the shutters. For six weeks there were always some officers in the next room. They wished to sleep in the Queen's room. The most she could secure was that they should stay between the two doors; two or three times they came in the night to see if she were in her bed. On one occasion when she could not sleep and had lit her lamp the officer came in and began a conversation with her. There was a camp outside the windows, which made the place into a pandemonium. All through the night the officers in the room relieved each other every two hours.

"*Wednesday, 22nd.*—We passed Senlis at half past three without difficulty. At Pons, although the national guards were already afoot, no one said anything to us. We breakfasted at half past eight at Gournai: it snowed there fairly hard for an hour; afterwards it was fine and cold. Meanwhile we were much delayed by the slipperiness. We arrived at Bon-Avis at seven o'clock in the evening; we supped badly, and slept in our clothes in a carter's room.

"*Thursday, 23rd.*—Fine; very cold. Started at half past five; roads shocking as far as Cambrai; stayed there an hour and a half; the postillions would not ride out because of the roads, and the postmaster told me that nowadays he could not oblige them to do so. At last we found one who, on consideration of the lightness of the carriage, consented. We got past Bouchain all right, but at a little village of about ten houses, half an hour beyond Marchiennes, I was awakened by the stopping of the carriage and a gentleman asking Reutersvaerd for his certificate. I pretended to be asleep. After having read the paper for five minutes he said it was worth nothing; that the words upon it were *in the name of the King*, and not *in the name of the law*, which meant that the law was superior to the King; and moreover that there was no description upon it, and it was no good. Reutersvaerd lost his temper and said, 'But it is the Minister's passport, and he must know how they ought to be drawn up, and our

Minister would not have given us a passport if it were not in order.' The gentleman said, 'It is not in accordance with the model we have here; it is worthless.' Then the postillion, seeing the courier's badge, said, 'But, Monsieur, do you not see that these gentlemen are couriers? You have no power to stop them.' 'Assuredly,' said Reutersvaerd, 'and Swedish couriers, moreover; that is in the passport, and this is our Minister's.' The fool had not yet discovered that, and when he saw that Reutersvaerd was becoming civil he became impertinent. After a second reading he let us go on. He said we must not be surprised if we were stopped again at Marchiennes; and so we were, at the only gate that there is to go in by, by a sentry in a grey jacket. The officer, who was in an old brown coat, let us pass after we had told him that we were couriers and had shown him our passports. We were again stopped before Orchies, at a national barrier established with the object of searching for money. The people were civil and made no inquiries. At Orchies, which is a large place, they said nothing to us. The postillion informed us that we might take off our cockades. A league beyond Orchies we were out of France; no inquiries were made, and we were only too glad to be over the frontier. By four o'clock we were at Tournai, where we dined well, and in the same room where we slept on our way into France. What a difference!"

This was the end: Fersen never saw the Queen of France again. He continued to correspond with her,[1] however, though the letters were almost always in cipher. "They were sent sometimes by a safe hand, sometimes in a box of rusks, or in a parcel of tea or chocolate, or sewn into the lining of a hat or an article of clothing." He was at that

[1] Even after the 10th August he was kept well informed. On hearing of the fall of the monarchy he writes:—

"*Monday, 13th.*—Terrible news from Paris. On Thursday morning the palace was attacked, and the King and Queen took refuge in the Assembly; at one o'clock fighting was still going on in the courts and in the Carrousel. Blood was running in streams, many were killed and hanged, the palace was broken into in all directions, eight guns were pointed at it and fired. Romainvilliers was killed, and Daffy too; a thick cloud of smoke gave the impression that the palace had been set on fire. *Mon Dieu*, how horrible!"

time working out a scheme for descending upon Normandy at the head of a body of Swedish and Russian troops, whom he was to lead to Paris with a view to rescuing the royal family and carrying them off to England.[1] Even the death of Louis XVI did not destroy his illusions. In April 1793 he was still prompting the august widow in the Temple, in his old tone of affectionate authority, as to the line of conduct she should pursue when Dumouriez's army took possession of Paris and proclaimed her Regent. We must remember, too, the mysterious way in which he was kept informed, almost daily,[2]

[1] After the 10th August his anti-revolutionary hatred turned to fury; a note such as the following gives some idea of his paroxysms of rage: "Asked the Baron de Breteuil to persuade the King of Prussia to tempt Lafayette and the generals to come over with their armies, to dissolve their armies and surrender the towns, etc.; to have Dillon talked to about surrendering Valenciennes; to have the Swiss Guards demanded by the King of Prussia and the Emperor; to give Bouillé unlimited powers in the matter; to write strongly to the Comte d'Aranda.—15th August, 1792."

[2] It will not be inappropriate at this point to quote the passages from Fersen's journal regarding Marie Antoinette's death.

"*Sunday, 6th Oct.*, 1793.—An Englishman who has arrived from Switzerland said he paid 25 louis to go into the Queen's prison; he carried a pitcher of water into it. It is underground, and there is nothing in it but a wretched bed, a table, and a chair. He found the Queen sitting down, leaning her face upon her hands, her head wrapped up in two handkerchiefs. She was extremely badly dressed. She did not even look at him, and he said nothing to her; that was part of the bargain. What horrible details! I am going to ascertain the truth.

"*Monday, the 14th.*—There was not a word of truth in the news the Comte de Metternich had told us the day before. The traveller is a man called Aubré, a lawyer in this town, who carries on commercial transactions. He had just come from Paris with some things, and has not said a word of all that. This Aubré is a sort of Jacobin. He said, on the contrary, that the Queen was not ill-treated, as was said; that her room was as good as it could be in a prison; that her bed was of iron, with print curtains, good mattresses, and the necessary coverings, everything being very clean; that her dinner was that of a superior *bourgeoise* when convalescent; that when the jailer of the Conciergerie had been removed the woman who waited upon her and was very respectful to her was removed also; that after that the Queen did not wish to have anyone to wait on her. He added that he could have saved the Queen for 200,000 francs that had been offered to him, but that she had refused. This suggested to the Baron de Breteuil the idea of speaking to this Aubré, and promising him two millions for the same thing if he succeeded. I approved of the idea, but on condition that he should tell us his methods, so that we might make sure he did not regard the rescue of the Queen in the light of a lottery-ticket, and would not endanger her life to win the two millions, without a great probability of success."

On the 9th October Fersen went to see Drouet in prison, and questioned him at length as to the Queen's position. This is the gist of his answers: "That her life [the Queen's] is absolutely insecure; that if the Powers are successful and march upon Paris her death is certain, and even without

of the smallest incidents in her life in the Temple. "The Queen has changed very little . . . the Queen is having

that he cannot answer for her life; that the young King has nothing to fear; that there are nevertheless some people who are savage enough to wish to kill him, but if that happens it will be contrary to the opinions of the greater number; that the Queen will be held answerable for his—Drouet's—life; that she will not, however, be exchanged for him, though if it had been proposed in time the Queen and her family would have been given in exchange for the four commissioners surrendered by Dumouriez, for that had been decided upon; that the Queen was not at all ill-treated; that he had visited her in his capacity of superintendent at the Conciergerie; that when she came there first she had no bed but a wretched pallet; that finding her with a cold he had asked her the cause of it, and she had said it was owing to the dampness of her prison, which was a room on the lowest floor; that he had then had a room prepared higher up and had installed her in it; that he had seen that linen and everything she asked for was given to her; that he had a good bed and two mattresses brought for her, and had taken every trouble and had every possible consideration for her. The reasons for her being moved and her apparent ill-treatment were merely to impose upon the Powers; she was not, as a matter of fact, badly used; she had everything she asked for, and it was not true that the young King had been put upon a diet of black bread."

"*Sunday, 20th October.*—Grandmaison came to tell me that Ackerman, a banker, had received a letter from his correspondent in Paris, informing him that the Queen's sentence had been pronounced on the previous day, and was to have been carried out instantly, but circumstances had delayed it; that the people—that is to say, the people who were paid to do so—began to complain, and to say that *Marie Antoinette was to appear at the "national window" that very morning!* Although I was prepared for this, and have been expecting it since she was moved to the Conciergerie, the certainty of it altogether overwhelmed me. I had no strength left for any feeling. I went out to talk over this sorrow with my friends and Madame de Fitz-James, and the Baron de Breteuil, whom I did not find at home; I wept with them, especially with Madame de FitzJames. The *Gazette* of the 17th speaks of it. It was on the 16th at half-past eleven that this execrable crime was committed, and yet the vengeance of Heaven has not overtaken these monsters!

"*Monday, 21st.*—I could think of nothing but my loss, etc.

"*Wednesday, 23rd.*—A certain Rougeville, who said he was a lieutenant-colonel and a Knight of St. Louis, having been attached to Monsieur's household, had arrived with 200 louis in his pocket and some very good printed papers, of which he said he was the author. He said it was he who had wished to save the Queen, and that he was charged by her to tell the Emperor that if he received any papers or letters signed by her he was not to believe in them. The man was secured, and it seems that he is either a *carmagnole* who merely wished to emigrate, or else a spy, for he cannot name anyone who would answer for him. This evening there was a memorial service at the castle for the late Queen.

"*Monday, the 18th November.*—I went to see M. de Rougeville. The man seems to be a little crazy and very much pleased with himself and with what he has done; he gives himself great airs of importance, but his intentions are good, and he is no spy. Daubiez and he know each other. Madame de Maillé recognised him the other day from her window in the square as a certain M. de Rougeville who spent his life in the Queen's ante-rooms and followed her about everywhere. He is living here at the Hotel de Saxe-

baths . . . "; and further on: "The prosecutor of the Tribunal has demanded the documents accusing the Queen: it makes

Teschen, guarded by two officers who accompany him when he goes out. This is the substance of what he told me as to his last adventure in the Conciergerie. He knows Madame de Tilleul, a fairly rich and well-affected American, and they formed the project of saving the Queen. Then he made the acquaintance of a worthy man called Fontaine, a wood merchant, and through him of Michonis, the keeper of a coffee-house. He found both of them very willing. Michonis was sincerely devoted to the Queen, and refused the money that was offered him, but he gave some to the two other managers (of the prison). One day he accompanied Michonis into the prison. The Queen rose and said, 'Ah, it is you, M. Michonis!' and on seeing M. de Rougeville was extremely overcome, so much so that she fell back on her chair, which surprised the warders. He made a sign to reassure her, and to her to take the bunch of pinks in which the note was hidden; she dared not, and he dropped them without being able to speak to her. Michonis went out to see about some business in the prison, and he went also. The Queen then sent to ask Michonis to return, took care that he was engaged with the warders, and meantime said to Rougeville that he was exposing himself too much. He told her to take courage, for she was being helped, and he would bring her some money with which to bribe the warders. She said to him, 'If I am feeble and broken down, this [laying her hand on her heart] is not so.' She asked him if she would soon be tried, and he reassured her. She said to him, 'Look at me, look at my bed, and tell my relatives and friends, if you are able to escape, the state in which you have seen me.' Then they went out. The porter and his wife were won over. The plan was that Michonis, who had taken the Queen from the Temple to the Conciergerie, should go at ten o'clock at night to fetch her, by order of the municipality, as though to take her to the Temple, and should see that she escaped. In this way, having signed the porter's book so that nothing should happen to him, they actually went out; the two warders said nothing, for the sake of the fifty louis, but the last one stood out. Michonis told him that he had the orders of the municipality, but he said that unless Madame was taken back he would call out the guard. The attempt had failed, and Rougeville fled.

"Here are some details with regard to the Queen. Her room was the third door on the right as you go in, opposite Custine; it was on the ground floor, with the window overlooking the yard, which was all day full of prisoners, who looked through the window and insulted the Queen. The room was small, damp, and fetid, and had neither stove nor chimney; there were three beds in it, one for the Queen, another beside hers for the woman who waited on her, and the third for the two warders, who never left the room. . . . The Queen's bed, like those of the others, was of wood, with a palliasse, a mattress, and a woollen quilt, dirty and full of holes, which had been used for the prisoners for a long time; the sheets were of coarse grey cotton like those of the others, and there were no curtains, but an old screen. The Queen was dressed in a black jacket; her hair, cut short on her forehead and also at the back, was quite grey; she had grown so thin that she was barely recognisable, and so weak that she could hardly stand upright. On her fingers she wore three plain rings, but none with stones. The woman who waited on her was a sort of fishwife, of whom she complained very much. The warders told Michonis that Madame did not eat, and that if she continued to eat so little she could not live; they said that her food was very bad, and showed him a thin chicken that was almost decayed. '*Here is a chicken*,' they said, '*that Madame has not touched*,

me shudder . . . "; and finally the cry of pain wrung from him by the execution of October the 16th. He heard of it on the 20th. "The Gazette of the 17th speaks of it," he writes; "it was half past eleven that this execrable crime was committed. And yet the vengeance of Heaven has not overtaken these monsters! I have no strength left for any feeling . . . I went out to talk over this sorrow with my friends Madame de FitzJames and the Baron de Breteuil. I wept with them, especially with Madame de FitzJames."

This was the Madame de FitzJames who had once, in the white salons of the Trianon, rallied him so audaciously upon his conquest! The entry in Fersen's journal for the following day consists of these words only:

"I can think of nothing but my loss: it is fearful to have no positive details. To think that she should have been alone in her last moments, with no consolation, no one to speak to, no one to receive her last wishes! It is horrible. Monsters of Hell! No, my heart will never be satisfied without revenge."

He never knew that in the letter she wrote on the last day, at half past four in the morning, while the executioner was awaiting her, the Queen had penned, on the sheet of paper that still bears the marks of her tears, these words, which we may surely believe to contain a thought for the man who had served her so faithfully:

"I had friends: the idea of being separated from them for ever, and of their sorrow, are among the greatest regrets that I feel in dying: I would have them know at least that up to my last moments I was thinking of them. . . ."

The nightmare of October the 16th never ceased to haunt Fersen. Almost at once he lost all interest in the affairs of France: since *his* loss his memories were "veiled with tears."

and that has been put before her for the last four days.' The warders complained of their bed, though it was similar to the Queen's. The Queen always lay down altogether dressed in black, expecting at any moment to be killed or led to the scaffold, and wishing to go thither in mourning. Rougeville said that Michonis wept with sorrow about it, and told him it was quite true that . . . . when he had to go to the Temple to fetch the black jacket and the linen that was necessary for the Queen he was not able to go until the Council had held a meeting about it. These are the sad details he gave me."—*Le Comte de Fersen*, Journal.

He never married, and never left Sweden again. From time to time, when he heard of the triumphs of the French army, he was seized with a frenzied desire to avenge the dead woman to whom he was always faithful. "Oh, that I had armies!" he wrote in 1798, "armies to crush this vermin with!"[1] Perhaps it is to this undying longing for revenge that we must attribute his share in the conspiracies that followed the deposition of Gustave IV Adolphus, and the death of the hereditary Prince Christian Augustus of Augustenbourg. Fersen—such at least is the tradition firmly believed by those who bear his name to-day—"wished to be King in his turn, the better to avenge the murdered Queen."[2] This sublime but mad ambition was his undoing. He was accused of compassing the death of the Prince Royal; the calumny appeared in the public papers, barely veiled under the form of an allegory; and anonymous letters, which were circulated in the taverns, roused the wrath of the populace against him.

It was known beforehand that a riot would break out on the 20th of June, 1810, the day on which the remains of the Prince Royal were to be carried to Stockholm in a solemn procession and deposited in the Castle. As though some mysterious fate were persisting to the end in associating Fersen's life with the memory of the woman he had loved, this 20th of June, which was destined to be the day of his death, was the anniversary of the day on which, nineteen years before, he had helped the royal family to escape from Paris.

At eleven o'clock, Fersen, in his capacity of Grand Marshal of the Court, entered the gilded coach which was to take him to meet the funeral procession. As soon as he appeared furious cries arose; the crowd, ill controlled by the troops, made a dash for the carriage and broke the windows with stones; they tore up paving-stones to use as missiles; they peppered the panels of the coach with showers of penny-pieces. The coachman rolled from his seat, his forehead streaming with blood.

[1] Communicated by a member of Fersen's family.

[2] "Fersen negotiated, through the agency of one of his suite called Silfersward, with Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, and particularly with the English Government, to make sure that relations would remain *in statu quo* supposing that *the Government of the Prince Regent were to be modified in any way.*"—Same source of information.

At the end of the Stora Nygatan (a large new street), opposite the Maison de la Noblesse, at the moment when the escort was attempting to turn to the right towards the Castle, the mob barred the way in front of Fersen's coach. The horses were taken out, and a man in the crowd opened the door and dragged the Count from the carriage. Fersen cleared a way for himself with his fists, dashed into a house, rushed up the stairs, and took refuge in a little room adjoining a tap-room. But a howling mob pursued him: he was reviled and struck; his decorations, his cloak, his sword, were torn from him, flung out of the window, and rent in pieces by the people, who divided the fragments among them. Almost immediately afterwards Fersen himself appeared, breathless and mangled, his face covered with blood. A man had pushed him down the stairs, while others awaited him in the street; the enraged crowd received him with blows, struck him with sticks and umbrellas, flung bricks and paving-stones at him. They seized him by the neck, they tore out his hair—his white hair. They dragged him to the square, where a battalion of the guard was drawn up with ordered arms, and looked on calmly at the crime; then he was hustled to the town hall, and there, perhaps by a refinement of cruelty, he was given a moment of respite.

Witnesses of the affair have told how they saw him in a lower room, seated on a bench, worn out, breathless, bleeding. He asked for a glass of water, which was brought to him by a soldier of the city guard. But soon the cries arose again, "*À mort!*" Fersen was borne away by the surging crowd, carried into the courtyard, beaten down, trampled under foot. Then, when he was dead, his murderers fell upon his body, stripped it, dragged it along the pavement, naked, mangled, unrecognisable. There, with his head in the gutter, they left *le beau Fersen;* and it was not until two hours later that some soldiers covered him with a cloak and carried him to the guard-house in the neighbouring square.[1]

[1] *Le Comte de Fersen*, by the Baron R. M. de Klinckowström. *Introduction.* Account given in the trial of August 20, 1811, before the High Royal Court.

CHAPTER XIV

VARENNES AFTER THE DRAMA

TEN thousand men,[1] all crowded into Varennes, had witnessed the departure of the royal family at about seven o'clock on the morning of the 22nd. About a quarter of this rustic army followed the captive King, and were watched by the others as they marched away along the sunlit road, surrounding the two carriages in a compact mass. When this surging, dusty throng had disappeared on the road to Boureuilles, Varennes felt quite forsaken, for the little town, invaded as it was by an ever-growing multitude of peasants, carrying pitchforks, pickaxes, iron bars, and even hop-poles and sticks, was bereft of all its municipal officers, who had fared forth upon the Paris road. There was not a magistrate in the place, not a single "notable"; anarchy reigned supreme.[2] Beyond the bridge, among the vineyards, some of Bouillé's horsemen, who hastened from Monza and Dun, were to be seen waiting for the main body of the army. It was known that the attack would be terrible, the "repression" pitiless. As for methods of defence, there were none: the barricade on the bridge had been strengthened in order to defend the upper town during the first onslaught, but it was not likely that an improvised fortification of this kind would stand for many minutes against the efforts of several regiments. The lower quarter, in any case, was exposed to all attacks without any kind of protection, and the inhabi-

[1] The figures are given by Madame Destez in a letter to her mother.—*National Archives*, D. XXIXb 37.

[2] There was but one municipal officer who did not accompany the Varennois who escorted the King.—Rémy's Narrative.

tants had already deserted it, having crossed the river to the upper town, where they added their fears and lamentations to those of the throng who were already crowded there.

This expectation of tragedy had an irritating effect on the temper of the mob. Amid the alarming commotion that reigned in the only street of the town there appeared a few of Damas' dragoons—five or six in all—who, after being hustled, hooted at, and insulted, were taken possession of by the peasants as "hostages." As the royal berline, in leaving Varennes, passed in front of the town hall, Choiseul, who had been walking close beside the door of the carriage ever since it left Sauce's shop, jumped into the saddle and prepared to take the road with the prisoners; but his horse was quickly surrounded and seized by the bridle, while Choiseul was dragged to the ground, rolled over, and trampled upon.[1] With their shrewd instinct, the peasants appreciated the importance of such a hostage: the significance of the thing, though it was by no means a concerted plan, was quickly understood; an impassable wall of men barricaded the streets, Damas was arrested, so also were Floirac, the lieutenant of dragoons, and Rémy, the non-commissioned officer.[2] Romeuf himself, the emissary of the Assembly, to whom Choiseul's groom James Brisack had just lent his horse, was hemmed in, seized, and pushed towards the town hall, the door of which closed behind him. Thither too, Choiseul and Damas and Floirac were dragged, while pitchforks and flails were waved menacingly above their heads. Only Rémy succeeded in breaking away. Springing upon his horse, he rallied his five dragoons round him and drew them up "in line, with their backs to the town hall and their faces towards the little square, where every moment detachments were arriving from the neighbouring towns and villages."[3] The sixty hussars of the detachment quartered at Varennes, the sixty hussars who had not appeared since the day before, now came on the scene, fraternising with the mob, passing jugs of wine from hand to hand, and drinking "to the nation."[4]

[1] Choiseul's Narrative.
[2] Narrative of James Brisack, appended to Choiseul's Narrative.
[3] Rémy's Narrative.
[4] Rémy's Narrative.

VARENNES AFTER THE DRAMA

At about ten o'clock[1] a great tumult suddenly arose, a general outcry followed by a rush of feet: "Here is Bouillé! The Royal Germans are at the bridge!" The tocsin rang, the drums beat to arms. The crowd, in an agony of distress, besought the hussars to "go and reconnoitre!" A mounted trumpeter galloped down the street, which cleared suddenly before him.[2] But fresh cries arose, "The uhlans are coming in by the other way!" Then the trumpeter passed up in the other direction, galloping towards the Clermont road. Observers perched on the roofs of the upper town were watching the movements of the Royal Germans on the little hill beyond the river. Bouillé's soldiers were arriving in increasing numbers by the road from Charpentry, and were pausing at the brow of the hill that dominates the river; they were seen going to and fro on their weary horses, consulting together and making their plans, while still there came more and more of them, all in disorder, galloping at random, grey with dust from the pace of their ride.

While Varennes was expecting a merciless onslaught, Bouillé, having at last arrived in sight of the "rebel town," was gathering his officers round him. Major Deslon,[3] who had been there doing nothing since daybreak, with fifty horsemen who had hastened from Dun at the first news of the arrest, informed his chief of the course of events, told him of the impossibility of approaching the town, "defended as it

[1] "About two hours and a half after the King's departure," says Rémy.

[2] "A trumpeter galloped to the spot: all was confusion, although there were not many people."—Rémy.

[3] Charles Georges Calixte d'Eslon (Comte), born at Ramonchamp in Lorraine Oct. 14th, 1747; enlisted in 1760 in the legion of Conflans; captain in the Lauzun hussars 11th Oct., 1783; major on the 12th July, 1789; emigrated 22nd June, 1791. Went through the campaigns of 1792 and 1800 in Condé's army (Enghien's regiment). Received till Oct. 1st, 1814, a pension from his Britannic Majesty, and only returned to France with the King. He then begged, in the following terms, for the rank of brigadier-general: "The smallest mark of kindness on the part of his Majesty will put an end to all the insulting doubts to which he (Deslon) has been subjected since the affair of the 22nd June, 1791, at Varennes, when he had the misfortune to be unable to save his King in spite of his zeal and activity, having left, without receiving orders to that effect, the post at Dun which he was occupying seven leagues farther along the frontier, to hasten to the assistance of the King." D'Eslon retired in 1815 to Thann, department of the Haut Rhin.—*Archives of the War Office.*

was by the river and a very deep canal";[1] of the King's departure, and of how he had been dragged away on the road to Paris more than two hours before, and was doubtless now out of reach; of the rumour that the inhabitants of Verdun were on the march "with some guns with which to support the Varennois." Bouillé, however, decided that the royal berline must be overtaken, the mob that escorted it dispersed, and the King and his family rescued; but his officers pointed out that it was impossible to push on any farther "without giving food and rest to the horses, which were worn out by a forced march of nine leagues." Moreover, by the most favourable reckoning, Bouillé had but four hundred of his cavalry there; the rest were scattered here and there along the route, delayed by fatigue and the bad roads. Retreat was inevitable. "Never shall I forget," wrote one of the officers present at this consultation, "the expression of pain that convulsed every feature in M. de Bouillé's face; never shall I forget his gentle, piteous words of distress, as he turned to me and said simply, in a sad voice, 'Well, will you ever say again that I am fortunate?'"[2]

They turned away silently, casting one last look at that accursed town of Varennes, as it lay there so calmly beside the fatal river, with its rows of flat roofs rising one above the other in the smiling June landscape; and then began their sad retreat, the melancholy march of the vanquished. The men "shared the consternation of their leader."[3] As they left the town behind them the noise of the persistent tocsin gradually died away, with the roll of the drums and the various sounds that arose from the panic-stricken spot; but in every village they found the same state of excitement. The royal army had to endure a meeting "with several

[1] The river is not deep in the middle of summer, and the mill-canal is not long. If de Bouillé's officers had had the least topographical knowledge of the country, or had even consulted a map, they would have been aware that at a spot a little more than a mile from Varennes the Clermont road crosses over to the right bank of the Aire—that is to say, to the side that they were on themselves. Deslon, who with his cavalry was within sight of Varennes from five o'clock in the morning, could have entered the town without encountering any obstacle by going round by Le Petit-Boureuilles, without having to cross either river or canal.

[2] *Mémoire de M. le Marquis Louis de Bouillé.*

[3] *Essai sur la vie de M. le Marquis de Bouillé*, by Rene de Bouillé.

detachments of the local national guards, who were marching to Varennes with drums beating and flags flying,"[1] and the triumphant people "gave military honours" to the humiliated soldiers who were reluctantly being led by their officers to the frontier.

On that same evening de Bouillé, accompanied by his two

THE AIRE AT VARENNES.

sons and a few officers, passed by the Château of Thonnelles where, if the scheme had succeeded, he would have been doing the honours at that very hour to the King and Queen. As night fell he left France, never to enter it again. Almost immediately after passing the frontier, where the fleur-de-lys on the boundary-stone showed dimly in the twilight, he came to a wooded valley where the imposing Abbey of Orval stood peacefully beside its fishponds, encircled by the forest. The monks were at their evening meal. Bouillé asked them for shelter for the night: they were "startled by this military invasion and uneasy as to its motive," but it was in a cell of the visitors' wing that the Marquis de Bouillé spent this first

[1] *Mémoire de M. le Marquis Louis de Bouillé.*

night of his exile. On the following day he went on to Arlon, and thence to Luxembourg.

The half-dazed Varennois had watched the soldiers of the "great butcher" retiring without giving battle. They were, however, no easier in their minds than before, for this mysterious movement probably concealed some deep design. They therefore remained on the defensive.

At eleven o'clock,[1] at the exact moment when the trumpeters of the Royal Germans were sounding the retreat on the hill whence the attack was expected, Père Sauce and the municipal body, together with the magistrates and notables who had accompanied the King to Clermont, walked into Varennes, after a hurried march of seven leagues following on a sleepless night. Sauce and the municipal officers made it their first care to release Choiseul, Damas, and Romeuf; but nevertheless these officers were prevented from escaping by the fact that their horses were held prisoners, "with several sentries mounting guard over them at an inn."[2] But soon the excitement grew wilder, and when a detachment of the National Guard from Verdun marched into the town with drums beating and bayonets fixed, the officers—including even Romeuf—were again confined in the prison of the town hall, in a cell so unsafe and dilapidated "that in less than a week three prisoners had escaped from it through the walls."[3]

It was an agitating day, a day of fever and sudden alarms, alternating with hours of prostration, inertia, and lassitude. We have no description of the scene as a whole, but only isolated accounts of details; and indeed we may well believe that no narrative could give us any idea of the appearance of the little town as the hordes of peasants trooped into it in an endless procession, staggering with hunger and fatigue—for they had left their distant homes at daybreak and had been marching for hours. The surprising circumstance in

[1] This is the hour mentioned by Radet, and it harmonises in every respect with the allusions of those who were present on the 22nd.

[2] Narrative of James Brisack.

[3] Bimbenet, *La fuite de Louis XVI*, p. 121. "It was not possible to keep them in our prisons, for they are useless."—Letter from Madame Destez. *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37.

the affair is the admirable way in which these improvised battalions were organised. These peasants of the old *régime*, who are represented by some historians as terrified animals hardly distinguishable from their own cattle, were enrolled in one hour in their different ranks, formed into regiments, provided with arms, furnished with provisions, and ready to undertake a campaign. The village of Montblainville, a league from Varennes, was awakened at one o'clock in the morning, and instantly mustered "a hundred and fifty men armed with muskets, a hundred of them having bayonets as well." They took with them a carriage full of provisions, and the women who remained behind alone in the village set to work and baked enough bread to "entertain and feed two thousand men."[1]

[1] The official report of the municipality of Montblainville is among the *National Archives* (D. XXIXb, 36), and might well be quoted in its entirety, so valuable a contribution is it to rural history during the Revolution. Three mounted couriers arrived from Varennes at Montblainville at about one o'clock in the morning, shouting "To arms!" All the inhabitants were in bed: the alarm was sounded at once: in a quarter of an hour a hundred men were mustered and "started off without being properly dressed and without supplying themselves with food, led by two members of the municipal council." We now quote *verbatim*.

"These same members, returning promptly, brought the information that the armed force was not sufficient to withstand the enemy; that it was really the King and his family who were arrested, and that his escort would shortly come to carry him off, in spite of the resistance of the national guards, who were in danger of dying for lack of assistance, being for the moment insufficient in numbers.

"Thirty men were promptly sent to their aid. These men, having repaired with their arms to the guard-house, took a carriage full of provisions supplied by the wives of the townspeople, and loaded themselves with powder and shot for themselves and those who had gone before them; they then went to Varennes and joined their corps. Other couriers brought us the news that the forces were increasing, that the officers of the King's suite had been arrested, and that the detachment of the regiment of hussars had surrendered to the National Guard.

"The absent inhabitants of this place having returned, twenty of them started for Varennes, armed and supplied with food, after the King had left, and remained to guard that town with the other national guards who were there, so that our National Guard, including those on the road and those at Varennes, consisted of a hundred and fifty men, armed with rifles of which a hundred had bayonets. The remainder belonged to various citizens.

"In this place, which has a hundred and sixty active inhabitants, only two members of the municipal body remained behind. They took turns to hold the guard-house, together with a dozen aged and infirm men with five rifles between them, and several individuals who had left the country to carry on their professions.

"In addition to the carriage full of bread sent to Varennes, which

The energy, organisation, and co-operation of these villagers were, it would seem, equal to the negligence, indifference, and jealousy that one is forced to impute to the officers responsible for the safety of the royal family on their journey. It is plain that the fight was unequal between the ill-served, decrepit, irresolute monarchy and the peasantry of France, full of fire as they were, and of faith in their own strength and their own rights.

Even at Varennes, in spite of terror as to the future, in spite of overpowering weariness, enthusiasm was the order of the day. Housewives were employing all their arts in the feeding of their defenders: one cooked eggs,[1] while another cut slices of bacon and distributed them to the ranks; everywhere spits were turning, casks were being emptied, hot loaves being piled up, jugs passing from hand to hand; everywhere there was eating and drinking, in all the houses,[2]

remained in that town and was distributed by the local municipal officers to the national guards who arrived after the King's departure, we persuaded the women to bake some bread to be used in case of need, and this being done, there was enough that same evening to feed two thousand men. Towards evening on the same day two hundred men of the national guards of the neighbourhood arrived, seeking a lodging, and were gladly welcomed in the most comfortable houses of the place.

"The next day, the 23rd of the said month, being Corpus Christi Day, a courier of the Varennes constabulary was sent with a note from the municipality of that town, appealing for help for the Meuse districts, where the inhabitants were stopping bodies of troops who were convoying munitions of war. We instantly had the alarm sounded. A fair number of lads of the National Guard were mustered, and started without delay, led by their captain, whom we had supplied with sufficient ammunition and money for several days' fighting and subsistence. As their way lay through Montfaucon, and everything had calmed down, the municipal body of that place gave them, on the following day, a certificate to warrant their return, which they brought back to us. . . .

"In order to render to the Supreme Ruler the gratitude that is due to Him on account of this happy event, it was decreed that on the following Sunday a Te Deum should be sung to thank Him for this success—a success without any drawback—and that the officiating priest of the parish should be requested to have this done in the parish church. He promised to comply, and to call upon the National Guard and all the inhabitants of the place to be present on the occasion.

"Concerning all which we have composed and drawn up the present Report in the cause of justice and equity, which Report will be transcribed in full in the register of the municipality, to serve as a memorial to posterity and to encourage future generations to maintain with all their strength the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, as we shall do to our last breath."

[1] Rémy's Narrative.

[2] Letter from Madame Destez. *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37. "As far as we are concerned, the affair cost us a great deal in bread, wine,

in the doorways, in the streets, in the orchards, under the trees. Varennes had become an immense tea-garden, overflowing with the noisy glee of these people who had had no sleep, and were intoxicated with triumph, fatigue, the strangeness of their adventure, the hot June sunshine, and the expectation of danger. And when the evening fell upon this tragic day, when after the sultry hours the shadows crept gradually into the valley, bringing coolness with them, all these wearied national guards and townsfolk, prisoners, hussars, and villagers, camped out as best they could along the walls of the houses, or in great discomfort in the cemetery, or in barns, on the banks of the Aire or in the church of Saint-Gengoult, in the schoolhouse or in the market-place at the town hall, and slept as men sleep when they have done a hard day's work and have not had a minute of rest for twenty hours.

The night was quiet, or nearly so. Twice the call to arms was sounded,[1] but the defenders of Varennes were sleeping so well that they thought it an inappropriate moment to disturb themselves. Some adventurous characters, who had been kept awake by the effect of the wine, amused themselves with "spying at" Choiseul and his companions in captivity "through the holes with which their cell was ventilated,"[2] and even attempted to set fire to the prison, but some national gnards soon made them see reason.

At five o'clock in the morning of Thursday the 23rd the municipality, being now only anxious to be rid of the prisoners, handed them over to a detachment of the National Guard of Verdun. Choiseul, Damas, Floirac, and Rémy were all crowded into one carriage, which with a strong escort took the road to Verdun[3]; while Romeuf was set at liberty with apologies, but only on condition that he should start for Paris without delay.[4] He had some

beer, milk, beds, etc. etc.; not forgetting the worry and fatigue, and all that is entailed by an alarm of the kind."

[1] Rémy's Narrative.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] "On our way from Varennes to Verdun a halt was called, and we thought we were going to be shot, because our escort imagined they saw the Royal Germans coming to rescue us."—*Ibid.*

[4] James Brisack's Narrative.

difficulty in procuring a horse, and was only able to leave Varennes at eleven in the morning,[1] when the Corpus Christi procession was in the act of leaving the church to make its customary progress round the streets of the town.

For the Varennois, in spite of the circumstances, had no intention of failing in the observance of their old customs. Discord, however, was in the air, and the matter turned out badly. The former *curé*, M. Methains, had been replaced a few months before by a constitutional priest called Gaillet,[2] and it was this intruder who officiated in the procession of the 23rd of June, 1791. According to the usual custom, the procession made its way to the Convent of the Annonciades in the upper town, where an altar was usually set up; but on this occasion the nuns refused to open their doors to a constitutional *curé*. Negotiations were set on foot, but the nuns were firm. The entire municipal body then repaired to the convent, and pointed out that in the present excited state of the town the determination of the nuns might result in serious annoyance to them. The Annonciades were unconvinced. Meanwhile the crowd was awaiting the result of this colloquy in a state of the greatest excitement, and no sooner was the procession seen to begin retracing its steps than the whole street was filled with tumult. Vociferous threats were hurled at the aristocratic nuns; the convent door was burst open; the windows were broken with stones; the house was invaded, and the furniture thrown into the street. To prevent a more sacrilegious form of pillage the nuns were obliged to fly from the convent and take refuge in the town hall, where they were guarded for some hours "for their own safety's sake"; after which, towards the evening, they were "distributed about in various private

[1] Romeuf was making a mistake when, on returning to Paris, he declared before the National Assembly that he had left Varennes on the *Wednesday morning* (*Parliamentary Archives*, Vol. XXVII., p. 449). He spent the whole of Wednesday the 22nd at Varennes, and remained there in confinement during the night following that day.

[2] During the Revolution M. Gaillet forsook the priesthood and married. He retired to the neighbourhood of Jubécourt, and died in 1830.—*Manuscrit Coulonvaux.*

houses, where they were sheltered" until a more formal secularisation was effected.[1]

The Revolution had come to Varennes. The municipality, sitting *en permanence* at the town hall, assumed airs of supreme authority, and, driven by circumstances, intoxicated by their sudden importance, certain that all France would admire them and that the authorities set over them would be indulgent, they overstepped their powers recklessly. The incident of the procession was hardly over before the hussars quartered in the town appeared at the town hall. Their officers had vanished; they had no orders, no pay, no ammunition, no provisions, and their attitude at the time of the King's arrest assured them, on their return to the regiment, of a welcome which they were in no hurry to experience. The municipality of Varennes, being touched by their plight and grateful for their services, invited them to choose a leader from among themselves, upon which the hussars paid Quartermaster Charlot and a non-commissioned officer called Muller the compliment of electing them. The municipal council "at once raised these two soldiers to the position of officers, and gave over to them a copy of the resolution as a substitute for a commission." Moreover, as Lieutenant Rohrig in deserting his post had left his kit behind him, Charlot took possession of the epaulet of his late superior officer, and offered to buy his entire outfit "at a fair price."[2]

No time was wasted at Varennes during the days that followed the 23rd of June. The preliminary meeting in connection with the elections was held on Friday the 24th.

[1] *Manuscrit Coulonvaux*, Bimbenet, p. 124.

[2] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 38. Charles Moreux, known as Charlot, born at Dannemarie, Isle-de-France, December 23, 1750. He wrote on the 11th of July to the municipality of Varennes "that on his rejoining his regiment his colonel, Pestalozzi, had made him remove the epaulet, and had degraded him to the rank of quartermaster once more." He begged that the municipal officers of Varennes would refer the matter to the Assembly, and adds that if he cannot stay with his regiment he begs for a post at Varennes. The Revolution secured him a rapid career. He was made an ensign on the 24th of July 1792, a captain on the 23rd of November of the same year, and a major on the 13th Ventose, year II. In the year VII he was permitted to retire, and apparently settled down at Pont-à-Mousson.—*Archives of the War Office.*

"My husband," writes the wife of Judge Destez, "went to the town hall at four o'clock in the morning and came out at nine to go to the meeting, which he only left for dinner; and he is there still. I am certain that during the last three days he has not had six hours of rest, including the hours of his meals."[1] The great business at the town hall was the drafting of the official report of the arrest, the publication of which would spread "the immortal glory" of Varennes throughout the whole of France. For these humble *bourgeois*, unaccustomed as they were to wield the pen, the composition of this document was not free from serious difficulties: the first version was entered in the register of the commune on the 23rd of June, after a resolution dated the 19th and headed *Things necessary for the Feast of Corpus Christi.*[2] This first report on a subject of so delicate a nature was composed in a style as emotional as it was artless, and had no success with the Directory of the department, to which it was submitted: the gentlemen of Bar-le-Duc returned the effusion from Varennes, and sent with it the following unkind lecture: "An official report, gentlemen, should be a true and circumstantial recital of facts; its form does not admit of any rhetorical ornaments, and we fear that the picture you give in yours . . . appears a little exaggerated and even out of place." It was necessary, therefore, to begin the business again. It was confided to the two most learned men of the town —Lambert the surgeon and Judge Destez, it is believed[3]— and this time the purists of Bar graciously declared themselves satisfied, though they had indulged, so they wrote, in a few "corrections in matters of form, which the haste of the writers had prevented them from being able to make themselves." Thus revised, the report was printed and despatched to every commune in France.

The people of Varennes were convinced, and with justice, that the name of their town had been made famous for ever, and they waited with pride and impatience for the sensation

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] V. Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*, Appendix. V. Fournel published the two reports of the arrest in his book. See Appendix, p. 310 *et seq.*

which the recital of their exploits must produce in the capital. It was not till the morning of the 26th that the first news arrived from Paris, in the form of a letter from Mangin the surgeon, the man who had left Varennes at about two o'clock in the morning of the 22nd, immediately after Destez had identified the royal family in Sauce's house.

Mangin had covered the three leagues that lie between Varennes and Clermont in three-quarters of an hour. Continuing his journey at the same excellent pace, he had reached Châlons at eight o'clock in the morning, and found that the fact of the arrest had been known there since four, having been brought thither by Viet the postmaster, who had only left Sainte-Ménehould after the return of the triumphant Drouet.[1] At Châlons, Mangin took time to breathe. There he met with an eccentric who had hastened from Paris in the hope of finding a rôle that would suit him: Palloy, the famous *Patriot Palloy*.[2]

This man, who ever since the 14th of July 1789 had been exploiting the Revolution, thought that the present occasion was a good opportunity for acquiring immortality. He was one of those who had dashed forth, at the same time as Bayon, to the pursuit of the King; but being a less robust horseman, he had arrived at Châlons rather late at night, and had gone no farther.[3] He turned back therefore on the

[1] This was evidently what took place, but the authorities are not agreed. According to the Official Report of Sainte-Ménehould, Drouet returned to his own town from Varennes when *it was four o'clock* (see Ancelon, *La Vérité*, etc.), bringing the news of the arrest. Now, in the Official Reports of Châlons we read that "on the 22nd of June, *at four o'clock* in the morning, the Sieur Viez [*sic*], postmaster of that town, who had been sent the day before to Sainte-Ménehould, brought back to Châlons the news of the arrest of the King and Queen." It is incomprehensible how he had heard the news, since he could only have received it from Drouet; and Viet entered Châlons, if we may believe the Reports, at the very moment that Drouet entered Sainte-Ménehould.

[2] With regard to this curious individual see *Le patriote Palloy et les vainqueurs de la Bastille*, by V. Fournel.

[3] He succeeded in making it believed that he had gone all the way to Varennes. A statement to that effect was printed in the *Courrier de Gorsas* and in *Les Révolutions de France*. Choiseul even mentioned the circumstance in his memoirs. But it was physically impossible. If Palloy, like Bayon, had arrived in Varennes at about four o'clock in the morning, which is conceivable, he could not possibly have been able to overtake Mangin on the road and arrive in Paris with him at seven in the evening.

Paris road with Mangin, hoping that the latter would be worn out and obliged to call a halt before the goal was reached, and would depute him, Palloy, to carry the good news; but Mangin held out to the end, and as he even had a shrewd suspicion that his companion desired to rob him of his glory, he tried to shake off that gentleman *en route*. Palloy clung to him, however. At Bondy, which the two men reached at about seven in the evening, Mangin succeeded, by employing a ruse, in outstripping Palloy: the latter, however, overtook him at the very door of the National Assembly, and they entered the hall together. Together they handed to the President the despatches that had been entrusted to Mangin, and together they went out to seek refreshment and to rest—still together, for Palloy would not be parted from the man whose brilliant action was reflected upon himself. They were still together on the following day, when during the morning sitting, at about half past twelve, they appeared, brushed up and tidied, before the Assembly. It is true that Mangin was alone admitted to the bar, and made a little speech which was enthusiastically applauded; but Palloy, hearing the cheers from behind the curtain, could not bear to be excluded, and begged for admission. This favour was granted to him.[1] "I wish to inform the Assembly," he said, "that M. Mangin by himself was the means of collecting twelve thousand men to guard the King; and such was the pace at which he rode that his horse fell dead under him."

Mangin was annoyed by Palloy's interference. "The horse is not dead," he said, and for a moment it seemed as though the two partners were about to quarrel. But Palloy, seeing this danger, retracted his words. "True," he said, "he is not dead, but he fell down under my brave comrade." Mangin cut him short. "The important point, gentlemen . . ." he continued, and so finished his speech.[2] Palloy

A hundred and twenty leagues in thirty-one hours, without a pause and without rest! Moreover, a report by Bodan (*National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37) states definitely that Palloy only went as far as Châlons.

[1] *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 446. "*The President*: M. Palloy, a citizen of Paris, whose patriotism led him to follow the King, and *who has also arrived from Varennes*, begs to be heard." (*Yes! Yes!*)

[2] *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 447.

and Mangin, however, remained good friends. The latter did the honours of Paris to the Varennois, and his letter to his fellow-townsmen shows him to have been singularly intoxicated by his enthusiastic reception in the capital. "Yesterday I dined with our general, M. Lafayette, who received me with open arms. . . . I cannot walk a hundred yards in Paris without being seized and embraced by colonels, officers, patriots of all kinds and all classes—even the ancient fishwives, who positively gnaw me instead of giving me a mere smack. . . . I am going to-day to dine with M. Palloy. . . . I do not know if my poor horse is done for. . . . I tried even yesterday to begin my return journey, but I could not possibly have done it. To-morrow, however, I will try to take the diligence, for as for going on horseback, I am much too sore. I shall take good care not to go to the Palais Royal, for I think I should die outright there in the arms of the patriots."[1]

Two days later Drouet had an ovation of quite another kind. He was carried round in a triumphal procession, and "was squeezed so tightly that it seemed as though he must be smothered."[2] The resolute Varennois who accompanied the royal family to the Tuileries were received with equal enthusiasm. It is not known how many of these there were. The General Council of the Commune of Paris had taken all necessary measures for "the lodging and feeding of the national guards who had come from the country, and had intended to lodge them in the secularised convents and in five hundred tents that had been set up in the Champs-Elysées and the Champ de la Fédération."[3] It is probable that it was unnecessary to make use of these places, for by the time it reached the barriers the King's escort, large as it was, was composed only of men belonging to the country round Paris, who could reach their own houses that evening.

As for the Varennois, there were doubtless not very many of them—fifteen or sixteen, perhaps, judging from the menu of the modest repasts that were prepared for them by order

[1] Victor Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*, Appendix.
[2] *Le Babillard*, No. 21.
[3] *Journal de Paris*, quoted by Brette, *Histoire des Edifices*, etc.

of the Assembly by Beaumaine, who kept an eating-house in the Jardin des Feuillants.

"On the 25th: 20 bottles of beer, at 7 sols; 14 bottles of wine, at 1 franc; 16 plates of *potage au riz* or other soup, at 10 sols; 10 dozen of pastry, at 6 sols a dozen; 7 rolls, at 6 sols.

"On the 26th: 15 bottles of beer, 9 bottles of wine, 10 rolls, 6 dozen of pastry."[1]

After their entry into the town behind the royal berline amid shouts and cheers, in a cart decked with branches and garlands, the Varennois were lodged at Saint-Roch, where the *curé*, M. Legrand, had placed at their disposal "a large number of empty rooms in his house."[2] On the 29th June they went in a body to bid farewell to the National Assembly and take the oath to live in freedom or to die.[3] But before returning to their own hearths they were invited to dine with Palloy, who entertained them all at his house in the Faubourg Saint-Victor, at a grand civic banquet, where there was much feasting and gaiety. A hymn was chanted in their honour to the tune of *La Fanfare de Saint-Cloud:*

Vivent les gens de Varennes,
Clermont, Sainte-Ménehould,
Qui pour éloigner nos peines
Ont fait manquer un beau coup![4]

A legend—chiefly mythical—grew up round the facts. During the sitting of the 23rd Robespierre had suggested

[1] Brette, *Histoire des Édifices*, etc. A facsimile of the document is given.

[2] *Archives of the Office of the Commissioner of Police. Official Reports of the Commissioners.*

[3] *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 596.

[4] The affair of Varennes gave rise to several musical compositions. "Fantasia on the departure and return of the King and Queen," to the air of *Lorsque le roi partit de France.*—"The plots of the Court, and its departure," to the air of *Réveillez-vous, belle endormie*, by the Widow Ferrand.—"The pursuit and return of the family hitherto called royal," to the air of *Quoi, vous partez sans que rien vous arrête*, by Citizen Widow Ferrand.—"Flight and return of the King and Queen," by G. . . to the air of *Colinette au bois s'en alla.*—"The secret plots of the Court," to the air of *Charmantes fleurs*, by Citizen Widow Ferrand.—"Treason of the Court and the army," to the air of *Comme un oiseau*, by Citizen Widow Ferrand.

See *Les hymnes et chansons de la Révolution*, by Constant Pierre, Head Clerk of the secretarial department of the National *Conservatoire de Musique.*

that a civic crown should be awarded to Citizen "Mangin, who contributed more than any other man to the arrest of the King and his family."[1] Rewbell answered that "the merit did not all belong to Mangin: it was Drouet who first felt suspicious as to the rank of the travellers, and the question of rewards would call for a rigorous inquiry." The motion was laid before the Constitutional Committee, who were instantly overwhelmed with requests and claims.

Every man at Varennes thought the success of the affair was owing to himself, and discord reigned in the illustrious town. While complimentary letters and tributes of admiration[2] were pouring into the town-hall from every corner of France, the inhabitants, who had been so peaceful but a few days before, were convulsed with anger, spite, and jealousy. It was known that the Assembly was making inquiries, and each man began to advertise his own exploits. A certain Sieur Chevalot "circulated writings" proving that he was the chief agent in the arrest.[3] Sieur Gentil, who had formerly been in the mounted constabulary, put forward the same claim,[4] which had very little justification, if one may believe a memorandum by Citizen George, who, being a deputy from the Clermont district, was consulted by the Committee, and tried, much to his credit, to bring some kind of moderation into the demands of his constituents. At last, on the 18th August 1791, the Assembly published its decree. The town of Varennes was endowed "with the two convents of the Annonciades and the Cordeliers, for the accommodation of the Tribunal of the dis-

[1] *Parliamentary Archives*, XXVII, p. 450.

[2] These addresses are preserved at Varennes and form a large bundle. Some of them are astonishing. The address from the municipality of Paris begins: "Town and people for ever famous in the annals of history:" the inhabitants of Varennes-le-Grand (in the department of Saône-et-Loire, a few leagues from Salornay-sur-Guye) offered to change the name of their town and to yield the title of Great to Varennes-en-Argonne. Perpignan accompanied its letter with a crown, which was preserved in the town hall. Another village of Saône-et-Loire, also near Salornay, Saint-Gengoux-le-Royal (now Le National) wrote: "If the village of Arc became famous from having given birth to the brave woman who saved France, how much more famous should Varennes be, which," etc. And a little further on: "It was by chance that Jeanne was born at Arc: Jeanne is the only famous individual produced by that village."—See V. Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes*, Appendix.

[3] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 37. *Ibid.*

trict": it was granted, further, the lucrative honour of having a garrison; a detachment of cavalry would for the future be quartered there at the expense of the national treasury. The commune was presented with two guns, and a flag inscribed *A grateful country;* and to each of the national guards a musket and sword were given. Drouet received 30,000 livres; Sauce 20,000; Guillaume 10,000; Mangin, the innkeeper Leblanc, and such of his customers as had been at the *Bras d'Or* when the berline arrived, were given 6,000 livres apiece.[1]

[1] Here is the complete text of this decree, in which will be found many names mentioned in the course of the foregoing narrative:—

LAW granting rewards to those who served the State faithfully on the occasion of the events of June 21 and the following days, given at Paris August 22, 1791. Decree of August 18, 1791: LOUIS, by the Grace of God and the constitutional law of the State, KING OF THE FRENCH, to all whom it may concern, greeting.

The National Assembly has decreed, and we desire and ordain as follows:

The National Assembly, having heard the report of its Committee of Inquiry with regard to the rewards to be given to those who were most active in the service of the State on the occasion of the events of the 22nd June and the following days.

Pronounces itself satisfied with the zeal and prudence of the members composing the directories, the administrative bodies, and municipalities of the Meuse, the Marne, and the Ardennes, with the courage of the National Guard and constabulary of those departments, and with the public spirit of the troops of the line, who, the circumstances being as they were, supported the citizens; and declares these persons to deserve well of their country and to have honourably done their duty.

And moreover decrees:

1st. That two houses belonging to the nation, with their offices, situated in the town of Varennes-en-Argonne, and hitherto occupied, the one by the Annonciade nuns, the other by the Cordeliers, shall be appropriated, the first for the meetings of the district tribunal and the bench, and for the quarters of the national constabulary; the second to form barracks for the accommodation of the cavalry; and that the expenses of these establishments shall be defrayed by the national treasury.

2nd. That in the name of the nation the commune of Varennes shall be presented with two pieces of ordnance and a flag of the tricolor bearing this inscription, *A grateful country to the town of Varennes*; and each of the national guards of that town with a rifle and a sword.

3rd. That a piece of ordnance shall also be given to the town of Clermont-en-Argonne, and five hundred rifles to be distributed in the same way among the national guards of that district.

4th. That the public treasury shall pay, out of the 2,000,000 livres set apart for the reward of services rendered, to the citizens hereinafter named the following sums, namely:

To the Sieur Drouet, postmaster of Sainte-Ménehould, thirty thousand livres;

To the Sieur Sauce, *procureur* of the commune of Varennes, twenty thousand livres;

VARENNES AFTER THE DRAMA

The effect in Varennes was disastrous. The mutual resentment that had been latent since the night of the 21st broke out openly: war was declared from house to house; there were quarrels between neighbours, discussions in the town

To the Sieur Bayon, major in the Parisian Guard, twenty thousand livres.

To the Sieur Guillaume, clerk of the district of Sainte-Ménehould, ten thousand livres;

To the Sieur Leblanc the elder, innkeeper and officer in the National Guard of Varennes;

To the Sieur Paul Leblanc, jeweller, and lieutenant of grenadiers in the same town;

To the Sieur Justin George, captain of grenadiers at Varennes;

To the Sieur Coquillard, jeweller, and officer of the National Guard at Varennes;

To the Sieur Joseph Ponsin, grenadier at Varennes;

To the Sieur Rolland, major of the National Guard of Varennes;

To the Sieur Mangin, surgeon at Varennes;

To the Sieur Itam, major of the National Guard of Chépy;

To the Sieur Carré, commandant of the National Guard of Clermont;

To the Sieur Bedu, major of the National Guard of the same town;

To the Sieur Thevenin, national guard and registrar of the *Juge de Paix* of Les Islettes;

To the Sieur Féneaux, national guard and ex-quartermaster in the Limousin regiment, living at Sainte-Ménehould;

To each the sum of six thousand livres.

That out of the said two million shall be also paid as follows:

To the Sieur Regnier, of Montblainville;

To the Sieur Delion-Drouet, of Montfaucon;

To the Sieur Marie-Berthe, constable at Varennes;

To the Sieur Foucher, ex-quartermaster in the Belzunce regiment and national guard at Varennes;

And to the Sieur Lepointe, constable at Sainte-Ménehould;

To each the sum of three thousand livres.

5th. That the Sieur Veyrat, merchant at Sainte-Ménehould, and the Sieur Legay, officer of the National Guard in the same town, shall each be given a sum of twelve thousand livres for having received serious gun-shot wounds.

6th. That the Sieur Collet, of Villiers-en-Argonne, whose son, a constable at Sainte-Ménehould, was killed, shall receive the sum of three thousand livres.

7th. That the Sieur Labaude, national guard at Varennes, who was attacked and seriously wounded near Châlons, shall receive the sum of two thousand livres.

8th. That to the Sieur Lenio, constable at Clermont, shall be paid six hundred livres, and to the Sieur Pierson, supernumerary constable in the same town, four hundred livres.

Finally, that the President shall undertake to write a personal letter expressing satisfaction to the directories of the districts of Clermont and Sainte-Ménehould, and to the municipal officers of Varennes, Clermont, and Sainte-Ménehould.

We declare and ordain, etc., Paris, August 22, 1791. In virtue of the decrees of June 21 and 25, 1791. In the King's name: signed M. L. F. DUPONT.—*Archives of Varennes.*

council, and fights in the taverns! All who had received nothing, though the affair had cost them a considerable amount "in bread, wine, beer, cakes, and other provisions that had been devoured," thought themselves aggrieved; those who had received a reward felt it to be far less than their merits deserved. Everyone had dreamed of a good post or a large sum of money. The bulk of the population was indignant: everyone had done his duty; why favour some and give nothing to others? When Itam, the major of the National Guard of Chépy, received 6,000 livres, his whole troop protested, and presented a very vigorous petition to the Assembly. Itam had done nothing; he was a schemer, an aristocrat. They forced him to resign his post. Justin George, the son of the deputy, had the good sense to divide his 6,000 livres among his comrades of the National Guard and the school of Varennes. Sauce tried to save a portion of his gratuity, but his 20,000 livres were wrung from him, little by little, by dint of everlasting reproaches, insults, and invectives. And when towards the end of July the *prize-winners* came home from Paris, after their journey thither to receive their money and to be cajoled by the Parisians, "no one walked a step to meet them; on the contrary, they were treated with the most sovereign contempt. They were cashiered and degraded in the presence of their troops, and other officers appointed in their place, whom the municipality were forced to acknowledge."[1] Every man preyed upon his neighbour. Ah! Varennes paid dearly for its fame. And now it was the almost unanimous opinion of the inhabitants that "the Sauces and their associates" had drawn down upon the unhappy town the most terrible disasters by interfering, either from stupidity or pride, in the matter of the King's arrest—that it would have been much cleverer and much more profitable to everyone if his progress had been facilitated. For a reaction had taken place. Varennes was now the accursed town, upon which the royalists throughout France, the ever-growing body of emigrants, and every hostile foreign nation were calling down fire from heaven. Madame George, the

[1] Extract from a letter from Varennes, August 3, 1791.—*Pages nouvelles sur l'arrestation de Louis XVI*, by Armand Bourgeois.

deputy's wife, Citizen Hannonet, the Mayor's brother, and Destez, the *renegade* judge, received threatening letters from Luxembourg: "The day of vengeance will be cruel for regicide Varennes. Everything will be destroyed. Varennes, miserable Varennes, thou shalt be delivered up to the fury of

THE TOWER OF ST. GENGOULT AND THE "BRAS D'OR" INN AT VARENNES.

the Austrian soldier, led by the generous Bouillé! Over thy ruins the plough shall pass!"[1] This was the desire of all faithful royalists. "I hope that an example will soon be made of Varennes," wrote Fersen. And the peasants and humbler members of the community, to whom Drouet's exploit had been very costly and had brought no return, indulged in loud denunciations while they awaited these inevitable disasters. During the first days of the spring of 1792 the panic increased twofold, for by certain sure signs it was foretold that

[1] *National Archives*, D. XXIXb, 38.

the "great catastrophe" was at hand. The enemy was fifteen leagues from Varennes; the town was undefended; "the *emigrés* were well aware of its state of distress, and passed through it with a degree of audacity that could hardly be imagined." The Varennois were now persuaded that Duportail the Minister had "sold them to their executioners," since he had left them with barely a hundred muskets for five or six hundred national guards. For none of the promises of the much-abused decree had been fulfilled; there were "neither muskets, nor guns, nor troops." Varennes had received nothing. "This overwhelming state of things is reducing the inhabitants to despair; they are all taking the serious step of deserting their melancholy dwellings. Fifty-two families have already left the houses where they were born, and others have packed their possessions into bags and boxes and are preparing to drop a final tear on their poor household gods."[1]

Not one of the magistrates or officers who contributed "to the disaster of June 21st" retained the confidence of the people of Varennes. Radet, wise Radet, who advised that "the King should be allowed to fly," had become the tutelary god of his distracted fellow-citizens. On the 15th February 1792 he was appointed commandant of the National Guard; on the 16th March, major of the local battalion; and on the 25th of June he was nearly unanimously elected adjutant-general and *chef de légion*. And now it is the last day of August, and down there towards the east there is a rumbling sound not unlike the noise of distant thunder. What can it be? the people ask in terror. It is the noise of the enemy's guns bombarding Verdun. The whole night this ominous roar continued, but on the morning of Saturday the 1st of September it suddenly ceased, and on the following day came the news of the capitulation of the town. The last defence of Varennes was gone: there was nothing to do but to prepare to die. On the morning of the 5th, Radet, who had gone to visit his fields at Avocourt, saw some hostile troops advancing along the road from Esnes. He hastened back to Varennes, gave the alarm, put a stop to the threshing in the barns, locked up the latter, and took his wife and many other people

[1] Victor Fournel, *L'Événement de Varennes.*

into the woods.[1] Then he hurried back to the town and buried in his garden the supply of powder and shot that was kept in the convent of the Cordeliers. On the next day the Prussians crossed the bridge over the Aire and formally occupied the deserted town. Their first visit was to the town hall, where they took possession of the flag of honour, which was sent to Berlin as a trophy.[2]

Radet spared no pains in treating the invaders well and in negotiating with the officers in command. The conquerors, however, had no thought of massacres or reprisals; and the pious women of Varennes told a tale according to which this unexpected deliverance was due to a miracle. As the Germans marched into the town a Prussian soldier had thrown a ham-bone that he had just been gnawing at the fine statue of the Virgin that adorns the tower of Saint-Gengoult. The statue held out its hand to receive the missile, and fixed it firmly under its arm, where the people of the town were very careful to leave it.[3] The next day the Prussian was drowned at Auzéville.

The inhabitants gradually became reassured, and decided to return to their houses. The Prussians, it appeared, were rapacious but not cruel, and moreover their sojourn in the place was short. After the battle of Valmy they hastily packed their baggage and re-crossed the Meuse, and were seen no more for twenty-two years.

Varennes took up its life once more. The convents of the Annonciades and the Cordeliers were demolished, and the materials used for the building of new houses; the Archway was destroyed, and the Place de Latry levelled and cleared of the tombstones "which in 1791 lay here and there[4] over the ground," recalling the fact that "since Merovingian times" this spot had been used as a cemetery. The municipality sold

[1] *Mémoires du Général Radet*, p. 47.

[2] This flag is now in the royal arsenal at Berlin: upon the banner are two white stripes in the form of a cross, on a background of red and blue; in the centre an embroidered crown of oak-leaves surrounds a sheaf surmounted by a Phrygian cap with two horns of plenty. Inscription: *From a grateful country to the town of Varennes.*

[3] The bone remained there for more than half a century. When it disappeared "a new bone was given to the statue to replace the other." —*Manuscrit Coulonvaux.*

[4] *Ibid.*

the lands of the two foundations presented to it by the National Assembly, and the ground that had once been the enclosure of the Cordeliers became the *Pâquis*[1] of the town. Varennes had at last received, if not the muskets, at least the two guns that had been promised by the decree: but they remained unused throughout the Revolution, which here was not sanguinary, but merely dull. The Varennois, from 1793 to 1804, seem to have been in the state of depression and debility that follows on crises of too great violence. Napoleon, who "owed them his crown," as one of them said, showed them but scant gratitude: he confiscated the two guns on the pretext of having them recast, and took them away to Verdun, whence they never returned. No one protested; there was a feeling that soon the hour would strike when mementoes of the 21st of June would become compromising.[2]

In 1814 their fears were renewed by the Restoration. This time they unblushingly abjured the glorious past, their terror of Prussian reprisals being now succeeded by dread of the Bourbons' revenge. The best thing they could do, they imagined, was to send a deputation to Louis XVIII, to express their desire for forgiveness and their apologies "for what had occurred in the past." The delegates of the penitent town were received in the Tuileries on the 8th of July, at eleven o'clock in the morning. The address presented to the King was a beautiful composition, and implored him to accept graciously the profound regrets of the town of Varennes, "where the first links had been forged of that terrible and cruel chain whose weight had overwhelmed the whole of France." Louis XVIII assured them that he knew "his brother had had reason to praise the sentiments of a

[1] Feeding-ground for game, or pasturage.

[2] After 1830 the people of Varennes claimed their guns, which could not be found. Louis Philippe sent them instead two large guns taken from the arsenals of Metz or Verdun; and as no place was prepared for their reception, they found shelter in the barn of the priest's house. "In 1861 Napoleon III passed through Clermont on his way to Metz. One of the 'notables' of Varennes cried out, '*Vive la République*, one and indivisible!' The Emperor, who was about to speak, sat down again; but Varennes was once more deprived of its guns, which it never saw again, and its company of artillery was broken up."—*Manuscrit Coulonvaux.*

large number of the inhabitants," and he added: "That is the only thing I shall remember."

This forgetfulness was promised all the more willingly that all who had played parts in the drama to which Louis XVIII, no less than Napoleon, owed his crown, had died or disappeared. Many of them had had tragic ends. Madame Sauce, as we have seen, threw herself down a well in a panic; Guillaume, Drouet's companion, drowned himself in the cistern of a hovel where he was living like a hermit on the Côte-le-Roi, near Sainte-Ménehould; Roland, the major of the Varennes Guard, who had fired his pistol at Goguelat, lost his reason, and in his madness continually went through the motions of taking aim at an invisible foe; Signémont, the Knight of St. Louis who was deputed to organise the King's return, was found half eaten by wolves in the forest of Argonne on the Lachalade side. When his body was taken back to Neuvilly his wife refused to acknowledge it as his or to receive it in her house.[1] These dramatic events, occurring one after the other, made an unpleasant impression upon the survivors, and the people of Varennes did not care to speak of "the great affair." Even those whose enthusiasm had carried them the whole way to Paris in the train of the captive King had given up boasting of their exploit. Many of them had refused the compensation that they were to have received for their expedition, but in spite of their self-denial the journey to Varennes was a heavy burden on the public funds. The Treasury paid, for the *incidental expenses* of this escapade, 242,305 francs, 24 sols, 14 deniers.[2]

But it cost the King and the monarchy even more.

[1] Gabriel, *Louis XVI et le Marquis de Bouillé.*
[2] *National Archives*, M. 664.

INDEX

INDEX

Abbaye Prison, the, 76 *n* [2], 278.
Ackerman, M., banker, 296.
Acloque, M., brewer, 177.
Affry, Major Gen. d', 172.
Aiguillon, M. d', 173.
Aire, the, 304 *and n* [1].
Allonville, M. d', 153.
Amboise, M. de Clermont, d', 173.
Amnesty, the, 9.
Ancelon, E. A., 247 *and n* [2]; *La Vérité sur la Fuite*, 62 *n* [2], 63 *n* [1], 91 *n* [2], 142 *n* [1]; *Louis XVI. at Varennes*, 76.
Andoins, Jean Simon Etienne d', commands the dragoons at Sainte-Ménehould, 60–66, 227, 228 *n* [2]; receives de Choiseul's note, 229.
Angoulême, Duc d'—
  Arrest of, 263; kindness to Radet, 265.
Angoulême, Duchesse d', *Relation du voyage de Varennes*, 30 *n* [2], 32 *n* [3, 5].
Annonciades, Convent of the, 310, 317, 318 *n* [1], 323.
Arenberg, M. d', 173.
Argentin, L', horse of M. de Briges, 121 *n* [1].
Argonne, forest of, 66–7, 132, 325.
Argonne, invasion of, 180, 247.
Aristarque, the, 18 *n*.
Arlon, 289.
Arnould, postillion, 68, 76.
Artois, Comte d', 177.
Artois, Rue d', 224.
Aubré, M., account of Marie Antoinette in prison, 295 *n* [2].
Aubriot, M., report of, 54 *and n* [2], 86 *n* [1], 226 *n* [1].
Audré, M. de, 103, 180.
Aumont, Duc d', attacked by the mob, 108 *and n* [1].
Autie, Jean François, *see* Léonard.
Autie, Joseph Clair Auguste, 234.
Auve, 58, 131, 154–5.
Auzéville, village of, 67, 323.
Avaray, M. d', 30.
Avocourt, 256.

Babeuf, conspiracy of, 278.
Bac, M. Ferdinand, 271 *n* [2].
Bac, Rue du, 19, 36 *n* [5].
Bachaumont, *Mémoires*, 25 *n*[1].
Bailly, M., Mayor of Paris, 27 *n* [2], 104, 105, 109, 177 *and n* [3].
Balbi, Mme. de, 288–9.
Bancal, correspondence with Mme. Roland, 103 *n* [1], 110.
Bar, 212, 280.
Bar, Mme. de, 31.
Barère, *Mémoires*, 169, 172 *n* [1].
Barnave, M.—
  Appointed Commissioner, 180–7; escorts the royal party, 187–218, 292; Régnard de l'Isle and, 201–2; *report*, 217 *n* [1]; returns to the Assembly, 218–19.
Baron, postillion, 68.
Barré, Abbé, *cited*, 162 *n* [1].
Barry, Mme. du, 1.
Barthe, constable, 90.
Barthélmy, E. de, 52 *n* [2].
Baudot, Marc Antoine, *Notes Historiques*, 283 *n* [1], 285 *n* [1].
Bavay, 288.
Bayon, M.—
  The pursuit, 105, 117 *n* [3], 118–129; overtaken by Romeuf at Châlons, 129; at Sainte-

Ménehould, 131; Clermont, 133–4; Varennes, 135–8; the meeting with the King, 139–40; commands the mob, 152, 164; his reward, 319 *n.*
Bazoche, M. Charles, 240 *n.*
Beauchesne, *Louis XVII*, 121 *n* [1].
Beaugé, Louis Joachim, page, 98 *and n* [4].
Beauharnais, M.—
President of the Assembly, 104, 111–12, 115; proposes hearing M. de Laporte, 168–70; takes the military oath, 177; nominates the six commissioners, 215.
Beaulieu, Abbey of, 280.
Beaumaine, coffee-house keeper, 316.
Beauvau, company of, 26 *n* [4, 5], 27.
Beauvert, Mme. de, duties, 25 *and n* [3].
Bedu, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Bégis, Alfred, 234.
Bel, Jeanne le, wife of Drouet, 267.
Bellet, Mme., 89.
Bellevue, Hôtel, Brussels, 290.
Belval-Piesvaux, 280.
Bercq, retainer of the Queen, 216.
Bergstadt, *chargé d' affaires*, 291.
Berlin, the Varennes flag taken to, 323 *and n* [2].
Berline, the, description, 47–8.
Berthelin, M., 49 *n.*
Bertrand, Jean, pursues the berline, 69, 70.
Besançon, 264, 265.
Besenval, soldier, 7.
Biauzat, 115.
Biesme, hill of, 67, 257.
Bigault, J. B., 74, *n.*
Bimbenet, M. Eugène—
Pièces Justificatives, 11 *n* [1], 16 *n* [1, 2], 20 *n* [4], 25 *n* [1–4], 28 *n* [1, 3], 30 *n* [2], 33 *n* [1], 36 *n* [5], 42 *n* [2, 4], 44 *n* [1], 46 *n* [1], 48 *n* [1], 50 *n* [2], 99 *n* [2, 3], 101 *n* [2], 287 *n* [2]; *La fuite*, 9 *and n* [1, 2], 10 *n* [1], 166 *n* [2], 177 *n* [1, 2], 306 *n* [3].
Blanc, Louis, *cited*, 8 *n*, 211.
Blandin, labourer, 138.
Bodan, M., 106, 314 *n*; *Compte rendu*, 203 *n* [1].
Bonaparte, Napoleon—
Pius VII., arrest of, 252; Radet and, 258; the march to Paris, 263; Drouet and, 279; and the Varennois, 324.
Bon-Avis, 293.
Bondy, 44 *and n* [1], 118, 210, 225, 287 *and n* [1].
Borde, Mme. de la, 25 *n* [4].
Bossuet, Palace of, 203–8.
Bouchain, 293.
Boucher, footman, 225.
Boudet, M., Lieut., 227 *n.*
Boufflers, Comtesse de, 2 *n* [1, 2].
Bouillé, Chevalier de—
At the *Grand Monarque*, 77, 79 *n* [3], 81 *n* [1], 145, 228 *n* [2], 230; interview with Léonard, 230 *and n* [1].
Bouillé, Count Louis de, *Mémoires*, 81 *n* [1], 144 *n* [2], 230 *n* [1, 2], 232 *n* [1, 2], 304 *n* [2], 305 *n* [1].
Bouillé, General, the Marquis de—
Arrangements for the flight, 6; 14, 16, 17 *n* [1], 30, 54, 55 *n* [1], cavalry arrangements, 47, 183, 228 *n* [2], 231, 245, 256, 321; his orders read before the Assembly, 179–80; Mme. Elizabeth's jewels, 232; meets Fersen, 289; the arrival at Varennes, 303; hears of the arrest, 304; leaves France, 305–6.
Bouillé, Rene de, *Essai sur la vie, etc.*, 304 *n* [3].
Bourbon, Rue de, 103.
Boureuilles, 145.
Bourgeois, Armand, 320 *n* [1].
Bourlois, 136.
Bras d'Or inn, Varennes, 78, 79, 82, 84, 88, 91, 137, 242, 268, 275 *n* [3].
Braschi, Jean Ange, *see* Pius VI., Pope.
Breteuil, Baron de, 6, 295 *n* [2], 298.
Brette, Armand—
Histoire des édifices, 114 *n* [2]; *Le local des assemblées parliamentaires*, 178 *n* [1]; *Journal de Paris*, 315.
Briges, Comte de—
Journey of, 121 *and n* [1], 122–123; stopped at Chaintrix by Bayon, 123; horse of, 209.
Brionne, Hôtel de, 40.
Brisebarre, officer, 99.
Brisack, James, postillion, narrative, 76–8, 78 *n* [1], 79 *n* [1], 302 and *n* [2], 306 *n* [2], 309 *n* [4].
Brissac, M. de, 100.
Brown, house-porter, 23.

INDEX

Brunier, Mme., 25 *and* n^1, 30 and n^3, 32, 35 *and* n^2, 36, 42 n^3, 46, 82, 88, 138.
Brunier, Pierre Edouard, 25 n^1, 242, 268.
Brünn, Drouet imprisoned at, 276–8.
Brussels, the cage of Drouet at, 274.
Buirette, *see* Burette.
Burette, *Histoire de Sainte-Ménehould*, 131 n^1, 150 n^1.
Bussières, 49.

CADET, commanding officer at Varennes, 136.
Cain, M. G., 49 *n*.
Cambrai, 293.
Campan, Mme., *Mémoires*, 8 *n*, 18 n^1, 22 n^1, 210 n^1, 219 n^2, 220 n^1.
Campardon, *Le Tribunal*, 27 n^2; tables of, 236.
Camus, M., 112, 113, 114 n^1.
Canitrot, Mme., 68 and n^4, 75.
Carré, Sieur, 319 *n*.
Carrousel, the, 23, 26, 34, 100, 101, 292, 294 n^1; the Petit, 40, 42, 292.
Cavalerie, Anne, wife of Sauce, 239 n^1.
Cazotte, J. S., *Temoignage*, 202 n^1.
Cazotte, Jacques, *fils*, protects the royal family, 162–3, 163 n^1, 164.
Cervisier, valet, 74.
Cette, 264.
Chabrond, M., President of the Assembly, 178, 180.
Chaintrix, 50–1, 51 n^2, 52, 123, 125.
Chaledon, Mme., letter to Mme. Husson, 285.
Chalier, Abbé, curé of Notre Dame de l'Épine, 159.
Châlons, 47, 52–5, 152–161, 226, 292.
Champ de la Fédération, 315.
Champagne, the peasants of, 183.
Champs-Élysées, 212, 214, 315.
Chanoine, Sieur, 149 n^1.
Chapuy, Antoinette, *see* Brunier, Mme.
Charinet, Captain, 267 n^2.
Charlot (Charles Moreau), quartermaster, 311 and n^2.
Charnay, 281.
Charpentry, 303.
Chateau-Thierry, 182, 198.
Châteaubrun, de, tale of, 235–6.
Chatillon, hills of, 188.
Chaussée d'Antin, 43.
Chauveau, Citizen Jean Louis, 251.
Chenier, André, death of, 234.
Chépy, vineyards of, 135, 245; hill of, 145.
Chevalot, Sieur, 317.
Chevreau, Nicolas, 28 n^1.
Choiseul, Duc de—
Disposition of the hussars, 14, 47, 54, 55, 56, 65–6, 69, 70, 85, 226 n^1, 228, 254; *Relation du départ de Louis XVI.*, 40 n^1, 41 n^2, 42 $n^{1,4}$, 58 n^3, 68 n^2, 78 n^1, 85 $n^{2,3}$, 86 n^1, 88 n^3, 91 n^1, 92 n^1, 116 n^1, 125 n^2, 135 n^1, 136 n^2, 137 n^1, 142 n^2, 224 $n^{1,2}$, 225 n^1, 228 $n^{1,2}$. 302 n^1; in Sauce's house, 89, 138, 143–4; conducts Léonard to Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, 224–8; arrested, 302, 306; sent on to Verdun, 309.
Chorez, M., mayor of Châlons, 53, 128, 157 *and* n^4.
Chouilly, 162.
Christian Augustus, Prince, 299.
Claye, 35 *and* n^2, 37, 46, 116, 117, 119, 210, 225 n^1.
Clermont-en-Argonne, 47, 54, 65, 67-9, 133, 146–8, 179, 318 n^1; the Tribunal, 253.
Clichy, Rue de, 20, 43; Barrier of, 43 n^1.
Cochou, M., 88.
Collet, Sieur, 66 n^1, 319 *n*.
Collorédo, Prince, 271.
Coloson, Mme., 151 n^1.
Combier, A., *Mémoires du Général Radet*, 85 n^1, 137 n^2, 251 n^1, 255 n^1.
Compiègne, 288.
Comte, Pierre le, coachman, 19 n^2.
Comtoir, Jean Pierre, 94.
Conches, M. Feuillet de, 121 n^1.
Condé, Prince de, 27, 62, 166.
Condets, Faubourg de, 200.
Constant, M., mayor of Rouvrois, 248.
Constant, Pierre Gervais, lamplighter, 99.
Constitutional Committee, the, 317.
Constitutionel, the, 284.
Contrescarpe-Dauphine, Rue, 106.
Coquillard, Sieur, 80, 88, 136, 319 *n*.

INDEX

Cordeliers, Convent of the, 73 *and* *n* [2], 75, 317, 318 *n* [1], 323.
Coroller, M., deputy, 215, 217.
Corrupt, town of, 280.
Coulonvaux, M. Antonin Amable, *Manuscrit de*, 85 *n* [4], 311 *n* [1], 323 *n* [3, 4], 324 *n* [2].
Courtois, colleague of Drouet, 280.
Courty, Rue de, 103.
Courville, Abbé de, 30.
Couteulx, M. le, 215.
Crawfurd, Quintin, 14 *and* *n* [2], 43.
Creutz, Comte de, 2–4.
Crillon, M. de, 173.
Croy, Prince de, 166.
Curmer, Lieut., 115.
Custine, M. de, 173.

Dacier, M., deputy, 268 *n* [3].
Daffy, killed, 294 *n* [1].
Damas, Colonel, the Comte Chas. de—
Disposition of the dragoons, 47, 57, 67–9, 227, 254; reports himself to the King, 89 *and* *n* [1], 138; disarmed at Clermont, 133; the return from Varennes, 143–4; *narrative*, 67 *n* [2], 68 *n* [2, 5], 70 *n* [1], 89 *n* [1], 91 *n* [1], 125 *n* [2], 228 *n* [2], 229 *and* *n* [1]; receives Choiseul's note, 229; arrested by the mob, 302, 306; sent to Verdun, 309.
Dammartin la Planchette, 154.
Dampierre, Comte de, assassinated, 153–4, 154 *n* [1], 190, 292.
Daubiez, 296 *n*.
Dauchy, M., 111, 172, 178.
Daudet, M. Ernest, 14 *n* [1].
Dauphin, M. le, incidents of the journey, 31, 32, 34 *and* *n*, 162–3, 195, 198, 202, 209, 210–11, 214 *n* [1], 216, 217 *and* *n* [3].
De la Lune tavern, 58.
Decaze, M., 279.
Dégrelette, Abbé, 280.
Delagardie, Comtesse Hedvig, 1 *n* [1].
Delavigne, M., 114.
Delion-Drouet, Sieur, 78, 80, 319 *n*.
Desbille, wine merchant, 118.
Desclaux, Louis Jean Marie, page, 37, 38 *and* *n* [2], 107 *n* [2].
Deslon, Major, 303 *and* *n* [3], 304 *n* [1]; *narrative*, 52 *n* [1], 56 *n* [2].
Destez, M. Jacques—
Recognises the King, 86–88, 87 *n* [1], 136; the Varennes report, 312; receives threatening letters, 321.
Destez, Mme., 87 *n* [1], letters *cited*, 74 *n*, 87, 142 *n* [1], 244, 301 *n* [1], 306 *n* [3], 308 *n* [2], 312.
Deuillon, Sieur, of Châlons, 157 *n* [3].
Devillay, M., president of Clermont, 146.
Diavolo, Fra, the arrest of, 258.
Dillon, General, 257.
Dodo, Josephine, wife of François Clément Sauce, 239 *n* [1]
Dormans, 182, 184, 193, 196, 197.
Drouet, Claude François, 267 *n* [2], 280.
Drouet, Jean Baptiste—
Postmaster at Sainte-Ménehould, 60, 62 *and* *n* [2], 64 *and* *n* [1]; the recognition, 127–8; the pursuit, 65, 68 *n* [5], 69, 76 *and* *n* [2]; 78, 79 *and* *n* [3], 82, 148; Sauce confounded with, 248 *and* *n* [2]; children of, 267 *n* [2], personality, 267–8; before the Assembly, 268–269, 268 *n* [2]; votes for the King's death, 269 *and* *n* [1]; captured by the Austrians, 269–274; the cage at Brussels, 273–4; Fersen's account, 274–6; imprisonment at Brunn, 276–8; return to Paris, 278; escape from the Abbaye, 278 *and* *n* [1]; Napoleon and, 279; police search for, 279–81; subsequent history, 281–6; ovation in Paris, 315; pecuniary reward, 318 *and* *n* [1].
Drouet, Joachim Nicholas, 267 *n* [1].
Drouet, Victor Auguste, 279.
Druard, Jean Louis, 88 *n* [3], 138.
Dubois, Philippe, 101–2, 101 *n* [2].
Duchesne, groom, 121.
Dufay, Lieut., 106.
Dumas, Alexandre, 73 *n* [2].
Dumas, General Mathieu—
Appointed Commissioner, 180–187; escorts the royal party, 188–218; *Souvenirs*, 193 *and* *n* [1, 3], 201 *n* [4], 206 *n* [1], 208, 209 *n* [3].
Dumont, *Histoire de Sainte-Mihiel*, 248 *n* [1].
Dumoulin, Sieur, 281.
Dumouriez, capture of Paris, 295.
Duperrier, Jean Antoine, page, 38 *and* *n* [2].
Dupin, M., mayor of Sainte-Ménehould, 132, 150.
Dupont, M., deputy, 215, 217 *and* *n* [3].
Dupont, M. L. F., signs the Varennes decree, 319 *n*.

INDEX

Duport, Minister of Justice—
Refuses the memorial, 168; departure of the commissioners, 181; commission to Marie Antoinette, 219.
Duportail, M., minister, 322
Durand, name taken by Louis XVI, 46.
Durey, valet, 27.
"Durfort, Duchesse de," 43.

Échelle, Rue de l', 40.
Elbecq, M. d', 173.
Elizabeth, Mme., 23, 26, 29, 32, 35 *n* [1], 223—
The flight, 37, 38, 40–2, 46, 89; in Sauce's house, 138, 242; the departure from Varennes, 143, 144; and Signémont, 147; the return, 150, 157, 161 *n* [1], 162, 189, 190, 205, 214 *n* [1], 216; and Pétion, 188, 192–3, 200, 209, 216–17; and Jean Landrieux, 194–5; and the commissioners, 219; mystery of the jewels, 227, 228 *n* [2], 232, 237.
Épernay, 161–164.
Epinal, Roussel d', 98 *n* [3].
Espense, Le Bois d', 280.
Esterhazy, Count Valentine, correspondence with Marie Antoinette, 13–14.
Estourmel, M. d', *Souvenirs*, 234–5.
Étoges, 49, 122.
Étoile, L', 214.
Eugène, Prince, 258.

Faillette, M., landlord of the *Soleil d'Or*, 60–2, 151 *and n* [1].
Farcy, M., 64–65.
Féneaux, Sieur, 319 *n*.
Féreaux, the brewer, 257–8.
Ferme de Paris, 198.
Ferrières, *cited*, 18 *n*.
Fersen, F. M., Frédéric Axel, Comte de, 1 *n* [1], 2 *n* [1], 289 *n* [1].
Fersen, Jean Axel, Comte de—
Attachment to Marie Antoinette, 1 *et seq.*; appointments of, 5; the letters to the Unknown, 9–12; correspondence with Marie Antoinette, 12–14, 290, 294 *and n* [1]; arrangements for the flight, 14–21, 28–45; *Journal*, 16 *n* [3], 19 *n* [1], 20 *n* [2], 289 *and n* [2], 291–4, 295 *n* [2]; correspondence with Bouillé, 17 *n* [1]; leaves the berline, 45, 287; rumours regarding, 166, 207–8; visits Drouet in prison, 274–6, 295 *n* [2]; the ride to Valenciennes, 287–8; hears of King's arrest, 289–90; letters quoted, 289 *n* [1, 3], 321; secret visit to Paris, 291–4; sorrow at the Queen's death, 297–8; subsequent history, 299–300; *see also* Klinckowström, *Le Comte de Fersen*.
Figaro, the, 14 *n* [1].
Fischbach, G., *La fuite de Louis XVI*, 66, 131 *n* [2, 3], 244 *n* [1].
FitzJames, Comte, 275.
Fitz James, Duchesse de, 4, 296 *n*, 298.
Five Hundred, Council of the, 269.
Flandre, Mme., laundress, 166.
Floirac, Lieut.—
Arrest by the mob, 302; sent on to Verdun, 309.
Florentin, Captain, 93 *and n* [1], 136.
Foll, Mlle. de, 2 *n* [2].
Fontaine, wood merchant, 297 *n*.
Fontanges, Mgr. de, *narrative*, 41 *n* [3], 53 *n* [1], 71 *n* [1], 189 *n* [1], 190 *n* [1], 192 *n* [1].
Foucher, Sieur, 319 *n*.
Foucq, Adjutant, 89.
Fouet, Sieur, 149 *n* [1].
Fouger, Lieut. Louis, 95 *and n* [1].
Fouquet, T. B., 99.
Fournel, Marie Jeanne, *see* Sauce, Mme.
Fournel, Victor—
Le patriote Palloy, &c., 313 *n* [2]; *L'Événement de Varennes*, 18 *n*, 28 *n* [2], 53 *n* [1], 76 *n* [2], 82 *n* [2], 134 *n* [1], 137 *n* [2], 148 *n* [2], 246 *n* [1], 312 *n* [3], 315 *n* [1], 317 *n* [2].
Fournier, labourer, 119.
Francheville at Maubeuge, 269.
Frémin, postmaster at Bondy, 130 *n* [1].
Fromentières, 49 *and n* [2], 50, 122.

Gabriel, Abbé, *Louis XVI, le M. de Bouillé*, 64 *n* [4], 69 *n* [2], 71 *n* [2], 79 *n* [3], 135 *n* [1], 146 *n* [2], 147 *n* [1, 2], 325 *n* [1].
Gaillarbois, Hôtel du, 40 *and n* [2].
Gaillet, M., curé of Varennes, 310 *and n* [2].
Gameau, Mme., 19 *n*.
Garnier, constable, 280.
Gaultier-Biauzat, deputy, 170.

INDEX

Gazette de France, 283.
Genoude, 283.
Gentil, Antoine Philippe, valet, 98 *and n* [4], 100.
Gentil, Sieur, 317.
Geoffroy, A., *Gustave III et la Cour de France*, 4, 8 *n.*
George, Justin, captain of National Guard, Varennes, 78, 80, 319, 320.
George, M., deputy, 128, 317.
George, Mme., 320–321.
George, Marie Rose, wife of Radet, 253, 264.
Georges, Abbé Etienne, 49 *n.*
Géraudel, Père, 140–1.
Gibert, Berthe, 26 *n* [5], 129.
Giffard, M. Pierre, 13 *n* [6].
Gillet and Radet, 258.
Giroux, M., 263.
Goguelat, M. de, Assistant Quartermaster General, 6, 54, 55 *n* [1], 56, 60, 69, 75 *n*, 85, 89, 91, 227 *n*, 291.
Gorsas, *Journal*, 17 *n* [1].
Gougenot, Mme., 26 *n* [2], 28–9, 29 *n* [1], 37, 38 *and n* [1, 2].
Gougenot, Sieur, 29 *n* [1].
Gourbillon, M. de, 30.
Gourbillon, Mme. de, 38.
Gournai, 293.
Gouvion, M.—
and Mlle. Rocherette, 18 *n*, 292, 293; and the departure, 32 *n*[4], 35 *n* [1], 102–4.
Goyon, M., mayor of Maçon, 282, 286.
Grammont, Duchesse de, 224.
Grand Monarque, Hôtel du, 75–7, 79 *n* [3], 230, 241.
Grand Montreuil, Rue du, 286.
Grand Pré, 257.
Grandmaison, 296 *n.*
Granges-aux-Bois, 67.
Grégoire, Abbé, 172.
Grégoire, M., 215.
Gros-Caillou, Hôpital du, 110.
Grouillet, Mme., 286.
Guignard Baths, the, 36.
Guilbert, 136.
Guilhermy, M. de, *cited*, 214 *n* [1].
Guillaume, "La Hure"—
The pursuit, 65 *and n* [1], 69, 76 *and n* [2], 77, 78, 82, 148; before the National Assembly, 268 *n* [2]; his reward, 318, 319 *n*; death, 325.
Gustave III.—
Correspondence with the Comtesse Boufflers, 2 *n* [1, 2]; with Comte de Creutz, 4; with Count Fersen, 289 *n* [3]; journey of, 5.
Gustave IV, Adolphus, deposition, 299.

HAAS, Captain de, 248 *n* [2].
Ham, 288.
Hannonet, magistrate, 136, 321.
Harvey, Colonel, 274.
Hausset, Mme. du, *Mémoires*, 14 *n* [2].
Havré, Duc d', 279.
Hermann, M., 27 *n* [2].
Hézecques, Comte d', 39 *n* [2].
Holland, Lord, *Mémoires*, 8 *n.*
Hubert, Pierre, page, 23, 97 *and n* [2], 98 *and n* [1], 107 *n* [1, 2].
Hugo, Victor, 87 *n* [1].
Husson, Mme, 285.

ISLE, M. RÉGNARD DE L', 200–202.
Isle, Mme. Régnard de l', 201.
Itam, Sieur, 319 *n*, 320.

JACQUOT, MARIE BARBE, wife of Sauce, 249, 250 *n* [1].
Jardin Boutin, 43.
Jonnès, A. Moreau de, 108 *n* [2].
Joseph, Prince, 258.
Journal des hommes libres, 278 *and n* [1].

KELLERMANN, 257.
Kervélégan, M., deputy, 202.
Kilwinnick, in Ayr, 14 *n* [2].
Korff, Baroness de, 14 *and n* [2], 45 *and n* [2], 73.
Korff, Colonel de, 14 *n* [3].
Klinckowström, Baron R. M. de, Papers possessed by, 8 *n*, 13 *n* [6]; *Le Comte de Fersen*, 1 *n* [2], 3, 12 *n* [1, 2], 16 *n* [3], 18 *n*, 275 *n* [1], 276 *n* [1], 300 *n* [1].

LA CAVE, hamlet of, 186.
La Ferte-sous-Jouarre, 49, 122, 182 *and n* [1], 198, 201–2.
La Petite Villette, 118.
La Vendée, 271.
La Vérade, the lane of, 142, 255.
La Villette, 118; Barrier of, 43, 211.
Laage, Mme. de, 225.

INDEX

Labaude, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Lacour, Lieut., 66.
Lafayette, Marquis de, 19 *n* [1], 27 *n* [2]; attends the *coucher*, 39, 40, 42; hears of the flight, 102–3; controls the mob, 104–9; sends out the couriers, 108, 112; takes the military oath, 173; and the commissioners, 181; escorts the royal party, 211, 216; *mémoires*, 217 *n* [4], 219 *n* [3]; the Queen hands him the keys, 217; and the King's letters, 218; and Mangin, 315.
Lafontaine, M., 106.
Lagache, Sieur, 60 *n* [2], 61 *n* [1], 62 *and n* [3], 63 *n* [1], 64.
Lagny, Claude de, 50 *n* [5].
Lagny, Jean Baptiste de, 50, 123.
Lagny, Marie Anne de, *see* Vallet, Mme.
Lagny, Marie Rose de, 51.
Lambert, the surgeon, 312.
Lameth, M. Chas. de, 170, 173, 176.
Lamotte-Langon, 234.
Lance, Sieur, 149 *n* [1].
Landrecies, 288.
Landrieux, Jean, 194–5.
Langres, Lombard de, *cited*, 236.
Laporte, M. de, Intendant of the Civil List, 168–70.
Lapotherie, Sergeant, 89.
Lasalle, Henry, 87 *n* [1].
Lasalle, Marie Henriette, *see* Destez, Mme.
Latour, General, and Drouet, 271.
Lauzun, M., 7 *and n* [1].
Lavoye, 280.
Le Bourget, 45, 287 *and n* [1].
Le Cateau, 288.
Le Chêne-Fendu, farm of, 186, 187 *and n* [1].
Le Droit, 73 *n* [2], 74 *n.*
Le Matin, 13 *n* [6].
Le Moniteur, 274 *n* [1, 2], 277 *n* [1].
Le Neuf Bellay, 155.
Le Poitevin Baths, 36 *n* [5].
Le Quesnoy, 288.
Lebas, Pierre, postillion, 36 *and n* [5], 37 *and n* [1], 116–117, 116 *n* [1].
Lebel, Demoiselles, 280.
Leblanc, Jean, keeper of the *Bras d'Or*, 78–80, 318, 319 *n.*
Leblanc, Jean, Lafayette's white horse, 108–9.
Leblanc, Sieur Paul, 78–80, 319 *n.*
Lecomte, Pierre, deposition of, 20 *n* [4].
Legay, Sieur, 66 *n* [1], 319 *n.*
Legrand, M., curé of Saint-Roch, 316.
Leigel, Mlle. de, 6.
Lemoine, Sieur, valet, 39, 40, 97.
Leniau, constable, 69, 70, 133 *and n* [2, 3].
Lenio, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Lenoble, page, 98.
Léonard, M. (le Marquis)—
Sketch, 221–3; the journey with Choiseul, 224–8; proceeds with Boucher to Sainte-Ménehould, 228; disposal of Choiseul's note, 229 *and n* [1]; interview with Bouillé *fils*, 230 *and n* [1]; reaches Verdun, 232; subsequent history, 233 *and notes*, 237.
Léonard, the Chevalier, 221, 234.
Lepointe, Sieur, constable, 319 *n.*
Leroy, L. L., *procès-verbal*, 105.
Les Islettes, village of, 67, 133.
Lescure, *Correspondence Secrète*, 6 *n* [1], 107 *n* [2], 232 *n* [3].
Lescuyer, M. Joseph Guillaume, 217 *n* [4].
Lesorts, André, 281 *n* [1].
Levallois, cook, 206.
Levée, the, 198.
Lévis, Duc de, 37 *and n* [2].
Liancourt, M. de, 100.
Liège, M. de, 150.
Limon, Abbé de, 275.
Loger, Sieur, 149 *n* [1].
Lolivrette, M., 106.
Lombard, M., doctor, 141.
Longprix, Joseph, 27, 28 *n* [1].
Louis, Jean, 16 *n* [2].
Louis XV., death of, 2.
Louis XV., Place, 40, 214.
Louis XVI.—
Appointments for Count Fersen, 5; Gustave III. and, 6; and Mme. Rochereuil, 17 *n* [1]; preparations for the flight, 25–8, 30, 31, 35, 37, 38–42; the journey, 46 *et seq.*; recognised by Picard, 49, by De Lagny, 51 *and n* [2]; at Châlons, 52–4; failure of the hussars at Pont-Somme-Vesle, 55–6; recognition by Drouet, 64 *and n* [1]; Varennes reached, 70–9; the alarm, 80–2; arrival of Romeuf and Bayon, 135–143; in Sauce's house, 83–96, 135–143; destroying the papers, 141–2; the return, 145–164; at Châlons,

157-161; at Chouilly, 162-4; the memorial read, 170-1; arrival of the commissioners, 187; at Dormans, 193-5; and Pétion, 196-7, 199, 209-10; and Régnard de l'Isle, 200-2; in the palace at Meaux, 204-9; entry into the Tuileries, 214-20; letter to Sauce, 247; charge to Radet, 255 *and* n [1]; scruples, 291-2.
Louis XVI., Pont, 115.
Louis XVIII. (*See also* Monsieur.) 221; Varennes deputation to, 324-5.
Louis Philippe, 324 n [2].
Louvre, Hôtel, Dormans, 193.
Lucas, M., deputy, 175.
Luynes, Duchesse de, 222.

Machet, Sieur, 156 n [1].
Maçon, 281.
Maërgesse, Nicolas Sévérin, 281.
Maillé, Mme. de, 296 n.
Mailly, Baron de, *Souvenirs*, 109 n [1].
Malaissy, Marquis de, (*see* Maleissye.
Malaquais, Quai, 14.
Malden, Jean François de—
The flight, 26 *and* n [4], 27 *and* n [1], 28, 32, 35, 42 *and* n [2], 44, 46, 47, 50, 57, 61, 71, 76; the Queen's anxiety for his safety 207-8, 215-16.
Maleissye, M., Marquis de, *Mémoires*, 35 n [1], 55 n [1], 68 n [1].
Malouet, M., 213.
Mangin—
The ride to Paris, 90, 134 *and* n [1], 149, 179, 313-15; reward to, 318, 319 n.
Marchiennes, 293-4.
Mare, 257.
Maretz, 288.
Marie Thérèse Charlotte of France, *see* Angoulême, Duchesse d'.
Marie-Berthe, constable, 319 n.
Marigny, Rue, 20.
Marne, suburbs of, 52; Pont de la, 182, 198; the river, 186.
Marquant, Louis Antoine, page, 23, 39 *and* n [2], 97 *and* n [1, 2], 98 n [2], 100.
Martainville, 283.
Martineau, M., 114.
Mathieu, Sieur, of Châlons, 160 n [2].
Matignon, Mme. de, 222.
Matignon, Rue, 16 *and* n [1], 19, 20.
Matougues, 161.
Maubeuge, siege of, 269-72.
Maubourg, La Tour, *see* Tour-Maubourg.
Mauchauffé, M., 88.
Maugarni, 280.
Maurice, M., Oct., 50 n [3].
Mayence, 271.
Meaux, Square, St. Etienne, 47; posting house at, 118-20; the palace, 203-8; the return through, 203-10.
Mencke, Christine (Mme. Normand), joins Drouet, 279, 281, 285-6.
Ménilmontant, 118.
Menou, M. de, 173, 215.
Mercy, M. de, 3, 121, n [1], 289 n [3], 290.
Merle, secretary, 175.
Methians, M., curé of Varennes, 310.
Metternich, Comte de, 275.
Metz, 53.
Meunier, Gérard, 273-4.
Meunier, Noël, locksmith, 95 n [2, 3].
Michonis, coffee-house keeper, 297 n.
Millet, Rue, 116.
Minerve, the, 284.
Minutoli, General, 248 n [2].
Miollis, General, 259.
Miromesnil, Rue de, 20 n [3].
Modeste, *cited*, 203 n [2, 3], 207 n [1].
Monceau, Barrier of, 212.
Mons, 288.
Monsieur, brother of Louis XVI.—
The flight, 29-30; *narrative*, 29 n [2], 31, 32, 37 *and* n [2]; Radet and, 255 n [1]; arrives at Mons, 288; meets Fersen at Namur, 290.
Montblainville, 254, 307-8, 307 n [1].
Montesquieu, M., 173.
Montfauçon, 308 n; quarries of, 118; woods of, 141.
Montmédy, 29 n [4], 45, 227, 228.
Montmirail, 226.
Montmorency, M. de, 217 *and* n [3].
Montmorin, M. de, 45 n [2].
Montreuil-aux-Lions, 198.
Moras, woods of, 50.
Moreux, Charles, *see* Charlot.
Mormal, forest of, 288.
Moustier, le Comte de, 26 *and* n [5].
Escorts the royal carriage, 20, 44 *and* n [1], 46 *and* n [1], 57, 61, 62, 68, 71, 73; *narrative*, 47 n [2], 49 n [4],

50 *and n* [1], 58 *n* [3], 73 *n* [3], 75, 76 *n* [2], 81; *Relation du voyage*, 27 *and n* [1], 28 *and n* [4], 160 *n* [1]; Queen's anxiety for safety of, 207–8, 215–16.
Müller, officer, 311.

Nancy, 212.
Napoleon III., 324 *n* [2].
National Assembly, the—
Count Fersen's designs, 16; meeting after the flight, 110; dispatch of the couriers, 113; declared *en permanence*, 167; the memorial read, 168–72; the military oath, 173–4, 177 *and n* [4]; awaiting the news, 174–80; the commissioners appointed, 180; events during the return, 212; suspension of the royal power, 213; the Queen's statement, 219; committee of inquiries, 243; Drouet before, 268–9; Varennes decree, 318 *n* [1].
Necker, Mlle., 6.
Neuf, Pont, 109.
Neufour, 280.
Neuilly, Barrier of, 211.
Neuve des Mathurins, Rue, 168 *and n* [1].
Neuville, Mme.—
25 *and n* [2], 30 *and n* [1, 3], 32 *n* [1], 35, 36 *n* [1, 2], 42 *n* [3], 46, 81 *n*, 82 *n* [1], 88, 138, 141, 242, 268.
Neuville, Sieur Pierre Edme, porter, 25 *n* [2].
Neuville-au-Pont, 65–6, 69, 131.
Ney, Marshal, death of, 264.
Noailles, Hôtel de, 40.
Noailles, M. de, escorts the Queen to the Tuileries, 215, 216.
Normand, Dr., chase of Drouet, 279, 281.
Normand, Mme., *see* Mencke, Christine.
Notre Dame de l'Épine, 55, 155.
Noyon, 288.

Ogny, Mme., 156 *n* [1].
Orbéval, 58.
Orchies, 294.
Orléans, M. d', views the return, 214 *n* [1].
Orsay, Quai d', 36 *and n* [3].
Orval, Abbey of, 305.
Ostermann, Comte d', 45 *n* [2].
Ostrogothie, Duc d', 2 *n* [1, 2].
Pacca, Cardinal, 259–261.
Palloy (Patriot Palloy), 313–15.
Pamiers, 221.
Pan, Sieur le, 23 *n* [1].
Pantin, 118, 211.
Pardoux, M. de Saint, 41.
Paris—
Conduct on the departure, 97–117, 165, 172, 174; invasion of the Tuileries, 101–10; rumours concerning the flight, 165–7.
Pavillon de Marsan, 102.
Pellico, Sylvio, 276.
Pépinière, Rue de la, 20 *n* [3].
Péradon, page, 23.
Perpignan, address to Varennes, 317 *n* [2].
Person, 136.
Pétion, M. de—
Appointed Commissioner, 180–7; *Voyage de Pétion*, 181 *n* [1], 199 *n* [2, 4], 201 *n* [1], 209 *n* [4], 214 *n* [1], 216 *n* [4]; escorts the royal party, 187; and Mme. Elizabeth, 192–3, 200, 209, 216–17; and the King, 209–10.
Petit, postmaster at Meaux, 120 *and n* [1, 2], 130 *n* [1].
Petit Chaintry, le, 50.
Petit, Nicolas, blacksmith, 50.
Petit Temps, the, 248 *n* [2].
Petits Augustins, Rue des, 168.
Picard, François, postillion, 49, 122.
Picpus, the trench of, 234.
Pierry, the village of, 162.
Pierson, Sieur, 319 *n*.
Pius VI., Pope, burial, 251.
Pius VII., Pope—
Radet's arrest of, 252, 259–61; kindness to Radet, 265.
Plaiet, M., of Le Marne, 155.
Poincot, Nicolas, turnspit, 99 *and n* [2].
Polignac, Monseigneur de, 204–5.
Pons, 293.
Ponsin, Sieur Josef, 78, 80, 319 *n*.
Pont-de-Somme-Vesle, 47, 54 *and n* [2], 55, 56, 127, 132, 155, 226, 228.
Pool of Rupt, 153.
Porquet, Abbé le, *Histoire*, 198 *n* [1].
Port-à-Binson, hamlet of, 186, 187 *n* [1], 191.
Praslin, M. de, 173.
Préfontaine, Jean Baptiste, 73–75.
Princes, Cour des, 34, 35 *n* [1], 36 *n* [2], 100, 102; hôtel de, 291.

INDEX

Provence, Comte de, *see* Louis XVIII.
Provence, Mme. la Comtesse de, 26, 29, 32, 37, 38.
Pultier, tanner, 79, 82 *and* n [2], 88, 136.
Pusy, M. Bureaux de, 213–15.
Puységur, M. de, 93.

QUILLET, Sieur, 149 n [1].
Quirinal, the, 259, 261.
Quotidienne, the, 18 *n*, 283.

RADET, Général, Baron Étienne—
Mémoires, 85 *n* [1], 238 *n* [1], 306 *n* [1], 323 n [1]; plans for the King's escape, 93–96, 254–5; condemnation of, 252; personality, 252–4; position in Varennes, 253–4; arrival of the King, 254; the King's charge to, 255 *and n* [1]; Adjutant-Général for Varennes, 256–8; arrest of the Pope, 259–61; arrest of the Duc d'Angoulême, 263; the court-martial, 264–5; return to Varennes and death, 265–6; defence of Varennes, 322–3; *see also* Combier, A., *Mémoires du Général Radet.*
Radet, Mme., *see* George, Marie Rose.
Raigecourt, M. de, 77, 79 *n* [3], 81 *n*, 230.
Raillet, Lieut., 254.
Rambluzin, 280.
Ratantout, hamlet of, 145.
Raulin, Marguerite, Mère Drouet, 267 *n* [1].
Ravine, M. de la, 121 *n* [1].
Regnaud, M., deputy, 112, 113, 173.
Régnier, secretary, reads the memorial, 170–172.
Regnier, Sieur, 78, 79, 319 *n.*
Rémy, M.—
Narrative, 92 *n* [2], 144 *n* [1], 302 *n* [3, 4], 303 *n* [2], 309 *n* [1, 2, 3]; report of, 142 *and n* [2]; arrested by the mob, 302; sent on to Verdun, 309.
Renard, Sieur, 27 *n* [2], 102 *n.*
Renaud, postillion, 68.
Reutersvaerd, M., 291, 293–4.
Rewbell, 317.
Rheims, the rubble from, 159–61, 164.
Richelieu, Rue de, 291.
Rignon (Count Fersen), 13 *and n* [5].
Robech, Abbé, 196 *n* [1].
Robert, Charles, 121 *n* [1].
Roch, François, 20 *n* [3].
Rochambeau, M., 173.
Roché, M., courier, 130 *and n* [1].
Rochechouart, Mme. de, 166.
Rocherette, *see* Rochereuil.
Rochereuil, Mme. Hortense Sellier—
Betrays M. Antoinette, 17 *n*, 18 *n*; salary, etc., 19 *n*; account of the Queen, 292, 293.
Rochet, engineer, 106.
Rochet, Mme., name adopted by Marie Antoinette, 46.
Rocheterie, Maxime de la, *Histoire*, 7 *n* [1].
Rohan, Hôtel de, 162.
Rohrig, Lieut. Léonard, 75, 81 *n*; disappearance of, 90, 311.
Roland, Mme., letter to Bancal, 103 *n* [1, 2], 110.
Roland, Major Jean François, 91, 95, 325.
Rolland, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Rollot, M., 106.
Romainvilliers, killed, 294 n [1].
Romeuf, Jean Louis—
Escort to Lafayette, 103, 105; tracking the King, 106, 115, 118–29; account of, 125 *n* [2]; overtakes Bayon at Châlons, 129; at Sainte-Ménehould, 131; Clermont, 133–4; Varennes, 135–8, 302; the meeting with the King, 139–40, 144; Drouet's version, 275 *n* [2]; arrest, 306; set free, 309–10, 310 *n* [1].
Ronsin, saddler, 41.
Rospigliosi Palace, the, 259.
Rostaing, M. de, 173.
Rouchet, death of, 234.
Rougeville, M. de, 296–7 *n.*
Rousseau, 222.
Roussillon, deputy, 176.
Royal, Pont, 20, 28, 36.
Royale, Cour, 102.
Royale, Mme.—
The flight, 31, 32, 34, 40; *narrative*, 43 *n* [4], 49 *n* [3], 53, 54 *n* [3], 69 *n* [1], 73, 74 *n*, 76 *n* [2], 126 *n* [1]; the return, 189, 190, 209; exchanged for Drouet, 278.
Roze, M., procureur of Châlons, 129, 155, 157 *and n* [4], 164.

SAINT-CHARLES, Sergeant, 89.
Saint-Denis, Barrier of, 115.

Saint-Dominique, Rue, 181.
Sainte-Anne, Rue, 42.
Sainte-Elizabeth, prison of, 274.
Sainte-Étienne, 203.
Sainte-Ménehould, 47, 54—
The stay at, 58–66, 127; Romeuf and Bayon reach, 131; the return through, 148–52; the hussars at, 227.
Saint-Fargeau, Le Peltier, 167.
Saint-Gengoux-le-Royal, 317 *n* [2].
Saint-Genoult, 323.
Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, 176.
Saint-Honoré, Faubourg, 16 *and n* [1]. 116; Rue, 27, 40.
Saint-Jean-des-deux-Jumeaux, 203,
Saint-Marcel, Rue des Fossés, 279.
Saint-Martin, Faubourg, 20; Barrier of, 42.
Saint-Mihiel, 247; Revolutionary tribunal, 258.
Saint-Nicolas, Hôtel, Clermont, 67, 68; Faubourg, 203.
Saint-Ouen, 166.
Saint-Priet, Mme. de, 166 *n.*
Saint-Prix, M., 22 *n* [1].
Saint-Roch, the Varennois lodged at, 316.
Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, 237.
Sanson, 223, 234, 236.
Sapel, Balthazar, Count Fersen's coachman, 20, 44 *and n* [1, 2], 287 *and n* [2].
Sauce, François Clément, 239 *and n* [1].
Sauce, Geneviève, deposition of, 239 *n* [1].
Sauce, Jean Baptiste, père—
Arrest of the King, 79–89, 241; leads Romeuf to Louis, 136; house of, 137–8, 143, 238–9, 242, 250 *n* [2]; attempt to burn the papers of Louis, 141–2, 142 *n* [1]; accompanies the berline to Clermont, 147; children of, 239 *and n* [1], 249 *and n* [1], 250; and the hussars, 240–1; personality, 242–3, 245; the accusations against, 246, 320; confounded with Drouet, 248 *and n* [2]; attacked by the Germans, 249; death of, 250 *and n* [1]; return to Varennes, 306; reward to, 318 *and n* [1], 320.
Sauce, Jean Baptiste, *fils*, 239 *n* [1]; arrest by the Germans, 248.
Sauce, Jean Baptiste Felix Auguste, 239 *and n* [1].
Sauce, Mme. (Marie Jeanne Fournel), 89, 141, 239 *and n* [1], 250 *n* [1]; death of, 248 *and n* [2], 325.
Sauce, Marie Anne Félicité, 239 *n* [1].
Sauce, Victor Scipion, 249 *n* [1].
Saxe-Teschen, Hôtel de, 296 *n.*
Schelcher, André, 49 *n* [2], 66 *n* [3], 67 *n* [1].
Schliek, Mme. 99.
Sécillon, M. Chevalier de, 265.
Ségur, Mlle. de, 153.
Senlis, 106 *and n* [2], 166, 288, 293.
Sentier, Rue du, 18.
Sèze, Comte de, *Histoire*, 121 *n* [1], 201 *n* [3].
Sèze, Maître de, counsel, 74 *n.*
Signémont, Bigault de, 92—
Secures order at Varennes, 142; leads the procession from Clermont, 147; command of the mob, 152; death of, 325.
Silfersward and Count Fersen, 299 *n* [2].
Simolin, M., 15 *n*, 45 *n* [2].
Siry, Colonel, 260.
Soleil d'Or, Sainte-Ménehould, 58, 60, 63, 150, 151.
Somme-Bionne, 131.
Sournie, M. de, 146.
Sparnassiens, the, 164 *and n* [3].
Sparre, Comte de, 5 *n* [1].
Spielberg, 273, 276, 277 *n* [1].
Staël, M., Swedish Ambassador, 6, 16 *n* [2].
Stegleman, Mme., 15 *n*, 45 *n* [2].
Stenay, 253.
Stetten, Baron Ferdinand de, 271–3.
Strel, Mlle., duties, 25 *and n* [4], 99.
Subet, Sieur, 149 *n* [1].

Talleyrand, M. de, 8 *n.*
Tapon, Claude, carrier, 166.
Tartier, Marie Anne, 51.
Taube, Baron de, 289 *n* [1].
Tausserat, M., 151 *n* [1],
Thennevin, M., 78, 80.
Theresa, Maria, 3.
Thevenin, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Théveny, chemist of Châlons, 123, 125, 129 *and n* [1].
Thibault, Mme., 29, 32, 37, 38.
Thibert, Sieur Louis, 281.
Thiébault, Général Baron, *Mémoires*, 101 *n* [1].
Thierry, *Guide du Voyageur*, 41; *Écuries du Roi*, 104.
Thionville, 256.

INDEX

Thonnelles, Château de, 30 *and n* [1]; 227, 305.
Thouret, M., 213.
Thun, Monseigneur, 205.
Tilleul, Mme. de, 297 *n.*
Tilly, de, page, 7.
Tiphaine, M., mayor of Pantin, 119.
Toulongeon, M., 180; *Histoire*, 199 *n* [1, 3, 5], 219 *n* [1].
Tour—Maubourg, M. de la, 115, 292—
Takes the military oath, 173; appointed commissioner, 180–7; escorts the royal party, 187–218.
Tournai, 294.
Tourzel, Mme. de—
Mémoires, 26 *and n* [1], 31 *and n* [1-3], 32 *and n* [2-4], 33 *and n* [1], 34, 35, 40 *and n* [2], 42 *n* [4], 43 *n* [2], 46, 47, 50, 51, 52 *n* [1], 73, 76 *n* [2], 80, 82, 88, 154 *n* [1], 157 *n* [1], 158 *n* [2], 187 *n* [1], 195 *n* [2, 3], 201 *and n* [5], 204 *n* [1]; in Sauce's house, 138, 242; the return, 161 *n* [1], 164, 189, 200, 214 *n* [1], 216.
Tracy, M., deputy, 173, 181.
Traunvisser, Charlotte de, 126 *n.*
Triancourt, 280.
Trilport, village of, 203.
Trompette, Étienne, 102 *n.*
Tronchet, M., deputy, 177, 219.
Troyes, 247.
Truet, Jean Baptiste, mayor of Dormans, 194, 196 *and n* [1].
Tuileries, the—
The espionage of the King, 22 *et seq.*; plans of, in 1791, 24, 33; the invasion by the Parisians, 101–10.
Tuileries, Quai des, 40.

Valence, 251.
Valenciennes, 106 *and n* [2].
Vallée, Mlle., 163.
Vallet, Gabriel, 51–2, 126.
Vallet, Mme., 51-2.
Vallière, Hôtel de la, 40, 41.
Valmy, mill of, 58; battle of, 257, 323.
Valori, M. de, courier, 292.
Valory, M. de—
The flight, 20, 26 *and n* [3], 27 *and n* [1], 28; outrider, 44 *and n* [1], 45, 46, 49, 50 *and n* [3], 56–8, 67, 68, 70, 75, 76, *and n* [2], 79, 80, 187 *and n* [1], 208 *n* [1]; the Queen's anxiety for his safety, 207–8, 215–16.
Varennes-en-Argonne—
The journey arranged, 9, 14–21; the King's arrival, 70–96, 134; plan of, 72; Romeuf and Bayon reach, 135–40; the departure from, 143; the message to the Assembly, 179; the *Grand Monarque*, 75–7, 79 *n* [3], 230, 241; Louis XVI's house, 238; critical position of, 245, 256, 301, 321–3; the national resistance, 307–10; the revolution in, 310; the municipal address to, 317 *n* [2]; deputation to Louis XVIII, 324–5.
Varennes-le-Grand, 317 *n* [2].
Vaublanc, *Mémoires sur la Révolution*, 235.
Vauciennes, 164.
Vauderlan, 166.
Vaudreuil, 7.
Vauriant, Nicolas, 99.
Vauthiers, J. B., 267 *n* [1].
Vauthiers, Louis, 286.
Vautier, Sergeant, 118.
Vavincourt, 280.
Verdun, 134, 212; capitulation of, 256, 257, 322.
Veyrat, Sieur, 319 *n.*
Vienne-la-Ville, 280.
Viet, postmaster at Châlons, 52, 53, 126–9, 182, 313.
Vieux-Maison, 49, 122.
Vignon, postmaster at Ferme-le-Paris, 198 *and n* [4].
Villeparisis, 210.
Villequier, M. de, 18 *n*, 33.
Violet, Sieur, 281.
Vitry-le-François, 51, 156, 161.
Voidel, M., 212–13.
Voltaire, M. de, 1–2.

Wacquant, Père, 79.
Wallon, tables of, 236.
Weber, *Mémoires*, 116 *n* [1], 189 *n* [1], 192 *n* [1], 217 *n* [2].
Weimar, Reichard, *Guide du Voyageur in Europe*, 119 *n* [2].
Welzien, Lieut. de, 240 *n* [2].

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